



February 14, 2018

Steve Coen, President and CEO
Kansas Health Foundation

Testimony for Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee on SB 38

Chair Vicki Schmidt and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on SB 38, to expand KanCare for many hardworking Kansans. We appreciate your willingness to receive testimony and to discuss this critical health issue.

The Kansas Health Foundation continues to be a strong supporter of this effort because it works toward our mission of improving the health of all Kansans. Providing affordable access to care to more than 150,000 working Kansans would in itself be significantly beneficial, not only for their health, but for their economic security. Today, these individuals often face difficult life choices because their income level puts them in a medical coverage gap. When Kansans can't afford private health insurance, they may either ignore health concerns or delay treatments – both of which may result in higher long-term costs as they're forced to pay out-of-pocket for care. In either case, the outcomes can be devastating and tragic.

But, we also can help our hospitals, health care providers and communities that are struggling due to the economic pressures of uncompensated care. When an individual cannot pay for care, the financial dominos start to fall. Our community hospitals are faced with significant revenue challenges for uninsured patients. This affects their day-to-day operations, which often means difficult financial choices, including whether to downsize or layoff hospital staff. Hospitals are often the largest employers in the community, and as hospitals reduce staff or close, the economic stability of the community begins to crumble. It's hard to see how leaving gaps in health coverage for more than 150,000 people has benefitted our state in any way.

At the Kansas Health Foundation, we see the strong connections between individual health, family health, business health and community health. We know based on last year's session that legislators from all political spectrums understand this connection and the importance of Medicaid expansion. The opportunity exists this year to capitalize on last year's momentum to pass this important legislation.

Background on the Kansas Health Foundation

The Kansas Health Foundation is based in Wichita, but statewide in its focus. With a mission to improve the health of all Kansans, KHF envisions a culture in which every Kansan can make healthy choices where they live, work and play. To achieve this, KHF focuses its work in four impact areas: access to affordable health care, healthy behaviors, civic and community engagement and educational attainment. During its 30-year history, KHF has provided more than \$500 million in grants to Kansas communities and organizations, and looks forward to working toward its mission and vision for many years to come.