

March 20, 2017

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations  
Kansas Action for Children  
Testimony in Support of House Bill 2044  
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chair Schmidt and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of expanding KanCare. Kansas Action for Children's vision is to make Kansas the best state to raise a child, and our organization shapes health, education, and economic policies that benefit Kansas children and their families. **We support expanding KanCare coverage because it will ultimately improve the health and well-being of Kansas children and families.**

**Expanding KanCare will reduce infant mortality.** Currently, many low-income women are eligible for KanCare coverage only during pregnancy. Inconsistent coverage for women contributes to the state's infant mortality rate of 5.9 deaths per 1,000 live births. For Kansans of color, infant mortality rates are even higher. In fact, despite the state's overall decrease in infant mortality in recent years, Hispanic babies are more than half as likely to die before their first birthdays and African American babies are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthdays when compared to their white peers. Offering health care coverage before and between pregnancies is a key strategy to reduce infant mortality for all Kansas infants.

**Expanding KanCare to cover more Kansas adults will reduce the number of uninsured children.** Kansas has made great progress in providing health care coverage for children – 95% are covered. But there is more work to do. Currently, 37,000 Kansas children lack health insurance coverage. Most of these children are eligible for KanCare, and children are three times more likely to be insured when their parents are also insured. By expanding coverage for adults, we can help more children get the medical care they need to stay healthy, active, and ready to succeed in school and in life.

**Covering adults will improve the health and well-being of Kansas children.** Children's health reflects the health and well-being of their parents. When parents have health care coverage, children are more likely to get regular checkups and essential preventative care, like immunizations. Health insurance also protects families from financial crisis following unexpected medical emergencies. Expanding KanCare to cover more Kansas parents is an effective two-generation strategy that will improve the health and well-being of Kansas children.

**For these reasons, Kansas Action for Children supports expanding KanCare.** KanCare coverage is a good investment for Kansas kids and can work even better with expanded coverage for adults. We respectfully request the Committee to support KanCare expansion, which will improve the health and well-being of Kansas children and families. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



720 SW Jackson I Suite 201  
Topeka, KS 66603

P: 785-232-0550 | F: 785-232-0699  
kac@kac.org | www.kac.org

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