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Amanda Gress
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Kansas Action for Children
Testimony for the Robert G. Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community
Based Services and KanCare Oversight

Chair Hawkins and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your efforts to ensure KanCare works for the one in three Kansas children who rely on it for health care coverage. Kansas Action for Children (KAC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization dedicated to shaping health, education, and economic policy that benefits Kansas children and their families. As the Committee considers how the Legislature can improve KanCare's ability to help every Kansas child grow up healthy, we offer the following recommendations:

This Committee should continue seeking information about the strength of the KanCare provider network. Requesting data about the number of providers in the network is a good first step, and KAC looks forward to KDHE's analysis of that data. The Committee has the opportunity to provide additional oversight of the state's role in guaranteeing an adequate provider network. For example, what quality control measures exist to confirm the accuracy of MCOs' network access lists? Does KDHE call any providers to confirm their KanCare participation, or cross-check provider lists with licensure records to determine whether listed providers are still practicing in the state? How many listed providers have submitted KanCare claims in the last year? These questions are particularly important given Dr. Melinda Miner's testimony to this Committee, which indicates multiple inaccuracies in the August 2016 list of KanCare dental providers.

The Committee should encourage the Legislature to allocate sufficient funding for appropriate reimbursement rates. It is not clear whether anecdotes of providers leaving KanCare represent a widespread trend. Tracking KanCare provider data can inform whether restoring the recent reimbursement rate cut is sufficient to sustain an adequate provider network, which is essential to ensure Kansans covered by KanCare can actually find a provider who will accept their insurance.

The Committee should continue monitoring the existence or size of any backlog in eligibility determinations. This is particularly important as open enrollment begins. The timeliness of coverage for populations in need of time-sensitive care – like pregnant mothers and newborns – deserves particular attention should administrative challenges resurface.

Ensuring our youngest Kansans receive medical care prepares them to excel in school, grow up healthy, and succeed in the workforce. As the Committee works to guarantee every Kansas child receives the health care coverage they need, please do not hesitate to contact me (amanda@kac.org) if Kansas Action for Children can answer questions or otherwise assist the Committee.



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