

*Medicaid
Expansion:*

WHY

IT

MATTERS



ALLIANCE FOR A
HEALTHY KANSAS

The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas is a statewide coalition working to promote policies that ensure everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Our membership is wide-ranging and includes business leaders, doctors and hospitals, social service and safety-net organizations, faith communities, chambers of commerce, advocates for health care consumers and many more.

We asked our partners:

**WHY DOES MEDICAID
EXPANSION MATTER TO YOU?**

HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID.

WHY IT MATTERS TO THE KANSAS ECONOMY

Expansion of KanCare eligibility will help as many as 150,000 working but uninsured Kansans gain access to affordable health care. It can also provide a boost to our state's economy because of a healthier and more efficient workforce and by creating as many as 13,000 new jobs, while reducing our overall state spending on health care. KanCare expansion will support better health outcomes, lessen stress about medical bills and lead to increased productivity.

— KEVIN WALKER

Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy,
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce

Ensuring a robust health care community is particularly important for border communities like Pittsburg, as failure to do so could push our residents to any of our neighboring states (all of which have expanded their Medicaid programs). An expanded Medicaid program would ensure a healthier, more productive and efficient workforce to continue fueling our community's and our state's business growth. Medicaid expansion is a common sense solution that would have a far reaching effect on our community and our state.

— BLAKE BENSON

President,
Pittsburg Area Chamber of Commerce

Medicaid expansion is critical for small businesses like mine. I strive to provide my employees with a good work environment but unfortunately I am unable to provide health insurance for my staff because it is unaffordable. Sometimes I lose employees to larger companies that are able to provide benefits such as health insurance. I believe expansion would allow me to bring in professional employees that will stay at the restaurant longer. That would improve productivity, make my employees healthier and strengthen my bottom line.

— JILL BROWN

Owner, Jillian's Italian Grill, Hutchinson

WHY IT MATTERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CARE

The people of Kansas need Medicaid expansion to increase access to mental health care or substance use treatment. Not only for economic development; not only for delaying inevitable closures or consolidations of health care organizations like community mental health centers or hospitals; and not only for the purpose of becoming part of the large majority of states in our country that have chosen to expand Medicaid, although all of these items have a legitimate place in the conversation. This issue is about access to care.

For Kansas to not participate in a program that would help increase access to mental health treatment and make Kansans healthier with such a large part funded by the federal government is like turning down federal highway funding that improves roads and makes travelers safer or turning down agricultural subsidies that help make food safer and cheaper. Surrounding states are all participating in federal programs that provide greater access and funding for behavioral health. Medicaid expansion is the only door remaining open to increasing access to mental health care through which we can not only improve lives but also save them, and we as a state should walk through it.



— KYLE KESSLER

Executive Director,
Association of Community Mental
Health Centers of Kansas

WHY IT MATTERS TO OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Medicaid expansion helps hospitals and the communities they serve. Studies show hospitals in states that have not expanded their Medicaid programs are six times more likely to close than those in expansion states. Since 2010, five rural hospitals in Kansas have closed. As Kansans, we cannot afford the loss in health care access if more hospitals follow suit. Expansion may not be the entire solution for financial struggling hospitals, but it's certainly a necessary piece. The data and research couldn't be clearer.

In addition to being the anchor of health systems, hospitals are among the largest employers in their communities and a key foundation of economic growth and development. Communities without a hospital are at a profound disadvantage in attracting new businesses and new residents. Medicaid expansion is a key factor in creating a positive policy environment for economic growth and opportunity in Kansas.

— **TOM BELL**
Former Executive Director,
Kansas Hospital Association

WHY IT MATTERS TO MOMS, DADS, AND BABIES

Low breastfeeding rates in Kansas result in significant excess health care costs and preventable deaths. If 90 percent of babies in Kansas were breastfed according to universal medical recommendations, Kansas would save nearly \$27 million per year in health care costs alone.

KanCare expansion matters to families after the birth of a baby. By expanding access to lactation support to more families, more mothers will be able to breastfeed for longer. States that have expanded Medicaid have seen a 10 percent increase in breastfeeding duration rates. Medicaid expansion has been proven to lower maternal and infant mortality and support women's health before, during and after pregnancy.

— **BRENDA BANDY, IBCLC**
Executive Director
Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition



According to the 2018 Kansas Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Systems (PRAMS) Surveillance Report, 18 percent of postpartum women in Kansas reported experiencing symptoms of depression in the first six months postpartum. The consequences of untreated perinatal mood and anxiety disorders are poor prenatal care in subsequent pregnancies, risk of medical/obstetrical complications, exacerbation of psychiatric illness beyond the postpartum period, self-medication/substance use, impaired bonding/attachment and adverse outcomes for the child or children. KanCare expansion is a family-friendly policy, as it allows access to affordable health care and has lifelong positive impacts on the well-being of parents and, in turn, the children they are raising.

**MELISSA HOFFMAN, TAYLOR ULREY, CARRIE WENDEL-HUMMELL,
CHRISTY SCHUNN, ANJALI KANSAL-RILL AND TARYN ZWEYGARDT**
Postpartum Support International, Kansas Chapter, Board of Directors

WHY IT MATTERS TO COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINICS

Community Care clinics are critical local resources, especially in underserved communities. Because they serve all who come through their doors, the amount of uncompensated care compared to their budgets is staggering—\$45 million in 2019. While expanding KanCare would not cover all uncompensated care, we know it would reduce this bill dramatically.

Reducing uncompensated care would allow Community Care clinics to use the increased funding to expand capacity. Having the correct capacity would give clinics the opportunity to increase their focus on local initiatives. Increasing access to medications and services for the treatment of mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) conditions could be pursued while ensuring healthy babies are born and high blood pressure is controlled. Community Care clinics pursue improved personal and population health. Increased revenue allows that to take place more efficiently.

It is time to give Kansans the health care they need and deserve. It is time to expand Medicaid in Kansas.



— DENISE CYZMAN
Chief Executive Officer,
Community Care Network of Kansas

As a community health center, our mission is to serve the underserved. We accept and see patients who usually have limited options for quality care. We are the only such organization in Johnson, Miami and Franklin counties. It is our mission to care for these people, and that is what we will do.

Medicaid expansion would allow each of us to help those less fortunate without attending a single fundraiser, without sacrificing extra money or time, without even having to exert physical energy of travel or standing long hours in a soup kitchen. Not only that, but what we all have an opportunity to do will benefit not only those who are around today, but also those who are not yet born. What we have an opportunity to do will benefit generations to come. Also, more health care coverage for families will alter the trajectory of those children toward more education, less entanglement in the criminal justice system, more productive future adults and more tax revenue for the great state of Kansas.



— WAEL S. MOURAD, MD, MHCM, FAFAP
Chief Health Officer,
Health Partnership Clinic

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PATIENTS

Breathing is essential to life, yet most of us rarely worry that our ability to breathe will be compromised by lung disease. That's why for more than 115 years the American Lung Association has worked tirelessly to illustrate the importance of lung health and access to life-saving healthcare to treat lung disease. These are uncertain times as Kansas and the nation struggles with COVID-19 but our legislators have the power to restore some certainty for 150,000 of our neighbors who desperately need access to health care. On behalf of lung disease patients across the state, the American Lung Association in Kansas & Greater Kansas City urges state legislators to expand KanCare in the 2021 legislative session.

— SARA PREM
Advocacy Specialist,
American Lung Association in Kansas and Greater Kansas City

More people than ever are surviving cancer because of earlier diagnosis and better treatment options. Still, cancer is a life-changing disease for survivors and family members. Depending on the type and severity of cancer one faces, the treatment process can be physically, emotionally and financially challenging. KanCare helps 415,000 people with disabilities, senior citizens, children and low-income adults live healthier, more productive lives and would do the same for 150,000 more Kansans if expanded thoughtfully. For the blood cancer survivors that the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society seeks to help, and for others facing serious medical conditions, there are good reasons to support KanCare expansion.

— DANA BACON
Regional Director of Government Affairs,
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and the body. MS is typically diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50 when most people are raising families, advancing careers and maximizing earnings, yet many must scale back their work and life activities due to disease progression. Only about 40 percent of those living with MS are in the workforce 10 years after they are diagnosed, meaning many lose their employer-based insurance. Losing coverage is often disastrous for those living with MS. It is time to join 38 other states and pass KanCare expansion to help ensure that all Kansans have access to quality, affordable and comprehensive health care.

— LAURA HOCH
Senior Manager—Advocacy,
National Multiple Sclerosis Society

The AHA believes that expanding KanCare has long been a missed opportunity to positively impact our workforce, our economy and the estimated 150,000 living in the "Medicaid gap" - making too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford coverage on the insurance marketplace. The American Heart Association will continue to advocate for Medicaid expansion until we cross the finish line. It is a travesty that after a decade of clear public support, this effort continues to be blocked by just a handful of lawmakers in Topeka. All Kansans living with heart disease and stroke should have the same access to care as those in the 38 states that have already expanded, providing residents with a level playing field, giving them a fair shot at getting through the coronavirus crisis healthy and whole.

— KEVIN HARKER
Executive Vice President, Midwest Region,
American Heart Association



WHY IT MATTERS FOR KANSAS KIDS

Expanding KanCare to cover more Kansas parents is an effective multi-generation strategy that will improve the health and well-being of Kansas children. Research shows that children who have health coverage are more likely to enter school ready to learn, graduate and become productive adults. Medicaid expansion helps children by boosting families' financial security and enabling children to get better care from healthier parents. This policy is an investment in Kansas kids and the adults who care for them that will pay off for generations to come.

— **HEATHER BRAUM**
Health Policy Advisor,
Kansas Action for Children

Kansas families are stronger when they have health care coverage allowing them to visit the doctor and pay for lifesaving medicines. When families are stronger, fewer kids enter our state's broken foster care system that too often confuses poverty for neglect. Kansas can support families and improve children's health by expanding Medicaid. Thirty-eight other states and the District of Columbia have already closed the health care coverage gap in their states. Now, more than ever, is the time to expand Medicaid in the Sunflower State.

— **QUINN RIED**
Policy Research Analyst,
Kansas Appleseed

WHY IT MATTERS TO KANSANS WITH DISABILITIES

Health insurance coverage for all Kansans is a disability rights issue. Medicaid expansion has been shown to boost employment for people with disabilities. In fact, a University of Kansas study showed a direct correlation between increased employment for people with disabilities and Medicaid expansion. Additionally, people with disabilities who use Home and Community Based Services rely on the labor of Direct Support Workers, most of whom are paid less than \$10 an hour, and none of whom have access to employer-provided benefits such as health insurance. Expanding Medicaid as a benefit that would serve Direct Support Workers is critical to maintaining the workforce we rely on.

— **AMI HYTEN**
Executive Director,
Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

The disability community supports KanCare expansion. States that have already expanded Medicaid have seen thousands of people with disabilities obtain and maintain health care coverage. Here at home, about 15,000 Kansans with disabilities who currently do not qualify for Medicaid would become insured with expansion. These other states have also seen significant cost savings and have reduced waiting lists for Home and Community Based Services, something we desperately need to do in our state. The time to expand KanCare is long past due.

— **ROCKY NICHOLS**
Executive Director,
Disability Rights Center

WHY IT MATTERS TO EDUCATORS

As teachers, few things cause us more anguish than hungry or homeless children. The anxiety and stress on these children and their parents manifests itself in difficulty focusing on learning and ultimately can lead to lower achievement. Many children who get their only meals in the school breakfast and lunch programs underscore the challenges faced by so many Kansas families. Learning is almost impossible when a child is hungry or homeless. Medicaid expansion offers the families of working poor Kansans a lifeline to opportunity.

A lesson we hope we learn from the experience of this current pandemic, is that health care is critical – not just for those who can afford private insurance plans or who are lucky enough to have employer-provided plans but for all our citizens including those in poverty and those who have lost their jobs. Additionally, Kansans who have no health care insurance generate a much larger cost impact on all Kansans than would be needed to provide Medicaid expansion. Passage of Medicaid expansion will not solve all of the issues of poverty but it is certainly one way that we can support low-income parents and their children.

— **MARK FARR**
President,
Kansas National Education Association

WHY IT MATTERS FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Breast cancer remains the No. 1 diagnosed cancer in women in Kansas. Unfortunately, our state has 20 counties with a higher breast cancer mortality rate than the national average.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) director warns that we could be facing another public health crisis if we don't resume our normal screenings at this time. He projects we will see upwards of 10,000 additional breast and colon cancer deaths over the next decade than would have been expected had COVID-19 not occurred.

This data and what we might face is why expanding Medicaid matters. It matters for the more than 3,500 women who will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. We must act now to expand the number of Kansans covered to proactively prevent losing the gains we have made in the fight against cancer over the past 30 years. This is why expanding Medicaid matters.



— **ERICA TERRY**
Chief Executive Officer,
Susan G. Komen Kansas +
Western Missouri
Co-chair,
Kansas Cancer Partnership

WHY IT MATTERS FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

As a registered nurse, I have seen firsthand the difficulty that Kansas citizens face every day regarding access to health care, especially primary care, due to lack of insurance. If they seek health care, it is through hospital emergency rooms. This was an untenable choice before the global pandemic and one that could now pose even deadlier consequences. Expanding Medicaid to include those making up to 138 percent of the poverty level will deliver health care to thousands of hard-working Kansans who contribute much to our communities and our economy.

— **KELLY SOMMERS**

**State Director,
Kansas State Nurses Association**

Medicaid expansion in Kansas will help keep our rural hospitals alive and help fund our ambulance services. Thousands of Kansans every year need the local ambulance service but are uninsured because they cannot afford private insurance, are not old enough for Medicare or make too much to qualify for Medicaid. The debt that local hospitals, clinics and, yes, your local ambulance service rack up providing health care to those who can't afford to pay means county commissions must cover the cost of their ambulance service. Fiscal hawks should be concerned that Kansas federal tax dollars, over \$4.3 BILLION so far and counting, cannot find their way back to Kansas. Thirty-eight other states have figured this out. Kansas can as well.

— **JASON WHITE**

Mid-America Regional Council

SIDE Inc., our peer-led support organization, is located in Kansas City, Kansas. We serve a membership of individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders. In the last 12 months, Wyandot Center has served approximately 435 clients who identified as homeless. Even before the COVID-19 crisis, our organization struggled to meet the needs of members who were homeless. We had to divert our programming to assist our homeless peers, such as monies for bus passes, food, clothes and escorts for persons to crisis stabilization. Medicaid expansion would be a cost-effective way to decrease the revolving doors of incarceration, homelessness and poor mental and physical health.

— **CHERIE BLEDSOE AND BRENDA ADAMS**

SIDE Inc. Board of Directors

WHY IT MATTERS TO OLDER KANSANS

KanCare expansion will both expand access to health care for people who desperately need it and it will save the state money. This issue is particularly important to AARP on behalf of Kansans who are 50 and older, who are too young to be covered by Medicare and do not have access to affordable health care.

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to declining health if they do not have adequate health coverage. Family caregivers are contributing care hours at great cost to themselves. Many family caregivers have left the workforce to care for a loved one and need health insurance themselves. Expansion will give people without health insurance access to preventive care that can save lives and ease dangerous and expensive emergency room overcrowding that hurts all of us.

Expanding KanCare provides access to affordable care, supports caregivers, and saves lives and money. It will give thousands of hard-working Kansans the opportunity to stay healthy and build financial security.

— **MAREN TURNER**

**Kansas State Director,
AARP**



WHY IT MATTERS TO THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Four years ago, my wife, Carrie, was diagnosed with Chiari Malformation. As a family with good insurance and an above-poverty income, I expected we'd be able to get the care she required without issue. I was very wrong. Our journey through her health issues led us to being tens of thousands of dollars in debt. Ultimately, we were forced into bankruptcy. We count ourselves lucky. We had access to insurance. Many friends we know are not so fortunate. We know people in our congregation who decide weekly whether to buy their prescription medicine or to get food. We have the opportunity to correct this for a large number of our friends and neighbors. Let's get off the fence of partisan bickering and do the right, just and moral thing. Let's expand KanCare.

— CHARLES MCKINZIE

Pastor,
Grandview United Methodist Church in Winfield

The Catholic faith tradition teaches that every person has a basic right to health care. It "rejects an unjust system where substantial numbers of residents are denied access to basic health care." We believe that Kansas' current health care coverage is unjustly inadequate. Expanding KanCare eligibility to Kansans who cannot afford or are not provided health insurance otherwise is presently the best solution to remedy this situation.

— JOHN SHIVELY

Coordinator of the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Sisters of
Charity of Leavenworth

The issue of access to affordable health care has long been an area of great concern for the faith community, in Kansas and nationally. We take this position based on our Scriptural and moral values. In Genesis it says, "[everyone] is created in the image of God"; we take from this that access to health care should be universal. In Matthew it says, "what you did for the least of my brothers and sisters, you did for me," from which we take that care should not be limited by ability to pay. Expansion is as clear a moral imperative as there is in Kansas policy right now. It is long overdue.

— REV. SUSAN CANDEA

Bishop,
Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

expandkancare.com