



**KANSAS ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
CARING FOR KANSANS**

**Testimony: House Concurrent Resolution 5013
House Appropriations Committee
February 22, 2013
Gretchen M. Dickson, MD, MPH**

Chairman Rhoades and members of the committee:

My name is Gretchen Dickson. I am a family physician in Wichita and member of the Board of Directors of the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HCR 5013 on behalf of the KAFP Board. We represent over 1,580 practicing, resident and medical student members from across this great state of Kansas. The mission of the KAFP is to promote access to and excellence in health care for all Kansans through education and advocacy for family physicians and their patients. As family physicians, we see people of all ages, both men and women, and we work with almost every type of ailment and illness that afflicts our patients. We see the effects of lack of insurance and under-insurance in our practices every day. We support expansion of Medicaid for many reasons.

Expansion would cover thousands of needy Kansans. As family physicians, we this scenario play out in our clinics. Each week, KAFP members provide free care or reduce their fees for an average of eight patients who don't have insurance or the financial resources to pay for their care. Our members' experience is the foundation for why we sincerely urge you to support Medicaid expansion, participating in a program that would pay 100 percent of the cost for Kansas to expand Medicaid to people who would qualify for the first two years, decreasing to 90% thereafter. The Affordable Care Act says it will provide federal subsidies to single adults earning between \$11,170 and \$14,856 for buying health insurance. Estimates by the non-partisan Urban Institute indicate that implementation of the Medicaid expansion will increase the number of people in Kansas covered by Medicaid by 169,000 people by 2022.¹ But, under the decision to abstain from expansion, a single adult who earned more than \$3,574.40 in Kansas could not qualify for Medicaid.

Expansion would extend life and reduce health disparities. Research consistently shows that people, who have health insurance coverage, whether public or private, also have a usual source of care, better overall health and better control of chronic conditions.² Studies also demonstrate that people without insurance skip or delay needed preventive services, and postpone care during early, easily treated stages of an illness. By the time these people seek help, they require much more intensive — and expensive — care that could have been avoided. Worse, they are less likely to have the resources to pay for that more expensive care. A July 2012 Commonwealth Fund article summarizes findings that show that states which have already expanded their Medicaid programs have significantly lower death rates.³

Expansion would improve health outcomes for Kansas children. Covering parents not only improves their own lives but also the lives of their children. The Institute of Medicine reports that the financial stability of a whole family can be put at risk if only one person is uninsured and needs treatment for unexpected health care costs.⁴

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otherwise might have enrolled in Medicaid may instead access premium subsidies, thereby putting their employer at risk of penalties.⁷

We appeal to both your heart and to your head and urge you to support expansion of Medicaid. And we stand before you, ready to assist with caring for those who would be covered under the expansion, and to help in any way we can. Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your service as a Kansas Representative.

¹ Holahan, J., Buettgens, M., Carroll, C. and Dorn, S. "The Cost and Coverage Implications of the ACA Medicaid Expansion: National and State-by-State Analysis." Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. Nov. 2012.

² New England Journal of Medicine, *Mortality and access to care after state Medicaid expansions*, July 25, 2012.

³ Adams, Rebecca. Commonwealth Fund Washington Health Policy Week in Review *Medicaid Expansions Linked to Fewer Deaths*. July 30, 2012.

⁴ Institute of Medicine, *America's Uninsured Crisis: Consequences for Health and Health Care*. 2009.

⁵ Gonshorowski, D. *Medicaid Expansion Will Become More Costly to States* The Heritage Foundation. August 2012.

⁶ CMS, *Frequently asked questions on exchanges, market reforms and Medicaid*. December 2012, question 25.

⁷ American Academy of Actuaries, *Implications of Medicaid Expansion Decisions on Private Coverage*. 2012.

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