



**Christie Appelhanz, Executive Director, Children's Alliance of Kansas**  
**NEUTRAL Testimony on SB122 before the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee**  
**February 14, 2019**

My name is Christie Appelhanz, and I am the executive director of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 17 private, non-profit child welfare agencies. Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on SB122 -- implementing Medicaid and educational services for foster care youth and certain former foster care youth.

**Understanding complex needs and costs of serving children in foster care**

We know that Kansas children who come into state custody have significant and complex behavioral health needs and a higher cost of care than the general population. Adopting a capitated plan involving a limited population with special needs could lead to unforeseen expenditures. The only way carving this population out will work is if the care they are provided is of the highest quality and directly addresses the specific needs of this population.

**Building on the current system**

For any bill that directly carves out children in state custody, Children's Alliance supports the adoption of outcomes to State requirements already in place for child welfare -- such as child safety, child well-being and child permanency. We ask consideration to be given to the role the Kansas Department for Aging and Disabilities would play in service delivery to avoid increased healthcare fragmentation. Finally, the bill is silent on HCBS waivers. Some youth in foster care are on the SED waiver or the DD waiver, and it is unclear if they would be eligible.

**More information necessary before moving forward**

Children's Alliance recommends additional research be conducted regarding transitional costs associated with moving children from their original MCO to a new, non-profit MCO. While the number of children enrolled in KanCare who come into state custody is unknown, a high percentage will already be enrolled with a provider. Entering state custody will trigger removal from their prior MCO and enrollment in a new MCO. The same issue will occur when children are returned to their parents. Confusion may happen when children removed from the home are served by different providers than children remaining at home.

**Supports for education**

Children's Alliance supports increased educational supports for youth in foster care who face an uphill battle academically due to lack of basic skills, frequent home and school placement changes and emotional upheaval. Whether or not SB122 moves forward, MCOs should work to provide whole-person healthcare by meeting the educational needs of this population.