

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 252  
*SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE*

January 17, 2020

Chairman Suellentrop and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cassie Dietrich, MD. As a physician anesthesiologist for over ten years, I support the bipartisan compromise KanCare expansion plan and urge you to pass SB 252 out of committee as written.

I am a native of the Midwest, but spent several years working as an anesthesiologist in a community hospital in Tucson, Arizona, after completing my residency training at the Mayo Clinic. At Tucson Medical Center, I cared for a large number of uninsured patients. Fortunately, during my time there, Arizona decided to opt-in on federally-funded Medicaid expansion. I would not have believed the results if I hadn't been there to see for myself! Prior to Medicaid expansion, a typical patient of mine would be an adult with severe complications from years of untreated diabetes, admitted for a lower extremity amputation. I placed countless epidurals on the labor and delivery unit in mothers who had never been to a physician during their entire pregnancies, placing both themselves and their babies at extremely high risk. After Medicaid expansion, I cared for patients with *controlled* diabetes, now candidates for basic outpatient surgery. The busy labor and delivery unit started seeing less high-risk, emergency cases, and more scheduled deliveries and C-sections on healthy parturients.

These are two examples of positive changes over several years of providing anesthesia services in a highly-populated Medicaid community. Overall, my patients became healthier due to preventative care, surgeries became more routine and less high-risk, and the birth of babies became safer for mother and child.

The increased quality of care we were able to provide to our community was a direct reflection of Medicaid expansion. The results were staggering, not just at the acute level I am accustomed to seeing as an anesthesiologist, but on many levels—healthier mothers able to care for their children, a healthier workforce for the community, a healthier hospital able to provide a higher quality of care. These are just a few examples out of hundreds. I can only imagine the positive change we could bring to the citizens of Kansas by passing SB 252.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cassie Dietrich, MD  
Overland Park, Kansas