

TO: Members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

FROM: Audrey Hill
Director of Government and Community Relations, Saint Luke's Health System

DATE: January 23, 2020

RE: Senate Bill 252 – Support

On behalf of Saint Luke's Health System and our over 12,000 employees, I am pleased to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 252.

Saint Luke's Health System is an integrated system with 18 hospitals and campuses caring for communities across 67 counties in Missouri and Kansas. As the Kansas City region's only locally owned not-for-profit health system, we're proud of our faith-based heritage, which we believe sets us apart and truly impacts the quality of care that we provide.

Saint Luke's provides comprehensive medical treatment at three traditional acute care hospitals in addition to seven community hospitals that serve a diverse range of patient needs in Anderson, Johnson, Leavenworth, and Wyandotte Counties.

Each of these communities has a significant number of individuals who fall within the coverage gap, Kansans who work for a living but earn too much to qualify for the current program and too little to get financial help to buy a private plan. These patients arrive at our facilities as a last resort after putting off care due to lack of insurance. As a result, their conditions are more complex and their care more expensive.

Our hospitals are committed to providing quality care to all patients regardless of insurance status or ability to pay, but this commitment comes at a price. The financial pressures associated with subsidizing care for the uninsured are enormous, and they impact our ability to invest in patient services and plan for patient care.

Over the course of six years and two federal administrations, we have watched neighboring states expand their Medicaid programs. We now know that expanding Medicaid leads to increased coverage gains and reductions in uninsured rates, both among the low-income population and within specific vulnerable populations. We also know that expansion positively affects access to care, utilization of services, affordability of care, and financial security among the low-income population.

Medicaid expansion would help move Kansas from a system that is riddled with coverage gaps, where individuals get health care at the last minute and at the highest cost to themselves and providers, to one which emphasizes health, wellness, and prevention through increased access to care.

Saint Luke's Health System supports SB 252 as a responsible path to expand Medicaid without delays or implementation barriers. We also support the inclusion of a hospital surcharge capped at \$35 Million, to be paid by all Kansas Hospitals in a fair and equitable manner with sustained legislative oversight.

We are enthusiastic about the opportunity to expand healthcare access to thousands of Kansans living and working in the communities that we serve. For this reason, I am happy to provide these comments in support of Senate Bill 252. Thank you for your consideration.