



House Bill 2064 Support

Written Testimony submitted to the
House Committee on Health and Human Services

Curtis Sneden, Executive Vice President
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce

February 8, 2017

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce supports HB 2064 which creates a unique Kansas response to the Medicaid coverage gap. The Act works within the current KanCare program to provide affordable health care coverage for the over 150,000 low-income Kansans, including eligible residents of Topeka and Shawnee County, at no additional cost to Kansas taxpayers.

Healthcare is among Shawnee County's most important industry sectors. Institutions like Stormont-Vail Health, St. Francis Health Center, Colmery O'Neil VA Hospital, Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital and Tallgrass Surgical Center are some of our largest employers and most respected corporate citizens. The providers that deliver health care services to the citizens of Northeast Kansas, including large hospitals and smaller specialized practices account for over 15,000 jobs in Topeka and generate a large share of our economic activity.

Kansas' decision thus far not to take advantage of the federal dollars available to states that develop answers to the question of closing the Medicaid coverage gap, has left over \$1.6 billion Kansas tax dollars in Washington. As a result, Kansas hospitals and health care providers have provided hundreds of millions of dollars in services with no reimbursement, putting them at risk financially. This has made it difficult for providers to recruit doctors and nurses and results in higher premiums and costs for those who have insurance.

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce supports common sense compromise on the issue of closing the Medicaid coverage gap. The Bridge to a Healthy Kansas is the right solution for our state because it requires participants to be accountable by requiring them to participate in a work referral and job training program. It will be budget-neutral, as well. The cost of insuring more Kansans will be offset by new federal funding, reductions in health care spending and revenue gains that result from insuring more people.



House Bill 2064 Support

While the Affordable Care Act, as such, may be changing, most elected officials at the federal level, from President Trump through Congress, espouse the goal of insuring as many Americans as possible. However the federal law evolves in this area, it will almost certainly continue to entail some form of federal reimbursement for those state's which have taken on the additional burden of expanding their Medicaid coverage. It will be critical that Kansas expand Kancare in order to establish a fair baseline for federal funding, whether in the form of a block grant or otherwise.

For all these reasons, we urge you to support HB 2064.

Contact:
Curtis S. Sneden, Executive Vice President
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce
(785) 231-6025 ▪ csneden@topekachamber.org