



Public Health
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Unified Government Public Health Department

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Testimony of Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas Public Health
Department (UGPHD) to the
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
Proponent for SB 252 • January 17, 2020

Chairman Suellentrop and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of Senate Bill 252 regarding expanding medical assistance eligibility. As a local health department, we are not a major recipient of Medicaid dollars, but we often work with those populations that rely upon the Medicaid system and will benefit from this expansion bill.

SB 252 will make tremendous strides in providing insurance coverage to Kansans currently without. Local health departments like mine often provide services to many of the most vulnerable, along with our duty to protect the health of all residents in our communities. We believe SB 252 will help in those efforts.

We are especially pleased to see SB 252 does not apply work requirements and hope that it will remain as such. SB 252's work referral program is a reasonable compromise that maintains realistic expectations while preserving the dignity of those who need to access the Medicaid system. Public health does recognize the value of employment as a social determinant of health and can support a referral system that does not compromise the health of Kansans with unrealistic mandates that jeopardize insurance coverage.

Safety net providers, like the local health department, have limited resources and service capacity. Insurance permits citizens to access care in a compensated manner that reduces stress on the safety net system and it is important to maximize insurance coverage as best we can. It is for these reasons that the Unified Government Public Health Department supports SB 252 and asks that you recommend it favorably.

Respectfully,

Terrie Garrison, Interim Director
Unified Government Public Health Department