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To: Kansas Senate Health & Welfare Committee

From: Debra Teufel, President/CEO Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce

Date: January 20, 2020

Chairman Suellentrop and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 252, on behalf of the 750 business members of the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce. Our local Chamber's Public Policy Agenda, adopted by our Board of Directors on behalf of our membership, representing businesses and individuals across Reno County, strongly favors this proposed legislation for several reasons.

Healthcare jobs are the single largest sector employer in the Reno County economy. Our Hutchinson Regional Healthcare System, Hutchinson Regional Medical Center, along with other local clinics and providers, are proponents of expansion of the KanCare system in Kansas.

According to recent statistics, nearly 1,600 uninsured low-income residents of Reno County would gain health coverage and over \$10 million of annual health care spending will be captured. Currently needs in healthcare exist, but uninsured residents are either going without care, or leaving bills with our current health care providers as unreimbursed and often uncollected. Some receive care but are unable to pay their bills, accumulating substantial debt and facing collections and further burdens being placed on them. This has put our hospital and other rural hospitals across Kansas in their own precarious financial position. Last year Hutchinson Regional had nearly \$20 million in uncollected debt.

Expanding KanCare would also provide health coverage to the residents of Reno County who fall into a coverage gap – those who earn too much to qualify for the current program, but too little to get financial help to obtain private coverage. This bill will allow them and nearly 150,000 Kansans to access preventive care to help them stay healthy and avoid costly ER visits, giving them more financial and emotional well being knowing they have sound healthcare coverage, and allow them to be healthy contributors to their families, communities and employers.

This bill is a step in the right direction for uninsured Kansans, for community hospitals and rural communities, and to help give peace of mind to those who desperately need care, but cannot afford it and certainly cannot afford the financial perils of going uninsured.

We applaud the efforts of the Kansas Senate to consider the importance of expanding KanCare for our State and communities and urge you to pass Senate Bill 252. Thank you for your favorable vote on this issue of great importance to Kansas.

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