



February 10, 2023

To: Senator Beverly Gossage, Chair
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Brenda R. Sharpe, President and CEO
The REACH Healthcare Foundation

Subject: Senate Bill 45: Update Income Eligibility for Children's Health Insurance

Dear Chair Gossage and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 45, which would make a correction in the Kansas statute that ties eligibility for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to the 2008 federal poverty level. The REACH Healthcare Foundation supports legislators' efforts to update the statute to ensure that qualified children are able to secure the health care and mental health services and therapies they need to be healthy, stay in school and grow up to be productive members of our communities.

The REACH Foundation's core mission is centered around ensuring that children and adults have access to quality, affordable and timely health care. Since our start in 2004, the REACH Foundation has invested nearly \$80 million in health, mental health and oral health services, health education, health care navigation and enrollment assistance to strengthen the health care safety net, and close coverage gaps that leave families without affordable insurance options.

SB 45 will help remove barriers that can get in the way of children obtaining and maintaining their health coverage by removing the fixed date that ties CHIP eligibility to 2008 income levels. CHIP is an invaluable resource and a lifeline for families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford private insurance.

CHIP covers routine doctor's visits, prescriptions and treatment in hospitals. Importantly, CHIP programs cover dental care, which often is not included in private coverage plans or has to be purchased separately.

CHIP also covers outpatient and inpatient mental health services, helping children and young people receive treatment and assistance with issues that can interfere with their education, social interactions, and ability to thrive in and out of school.

We appreciate the Committee's readiness to review this needed change and take action to create a permanent fix in the law that will help our state's children for years to come.

Brenda R. Sharpe, President and CEO
Contact: 913-432-4196 | brenda@reachhealth.org