

February 13, 2023

Senate Committee on Public Health & Welfare  
State Capitol  
300 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Topeka, KS 66612

**Re: Health Forward Foundation support for Senate Bill 45 – updating income eligibility requirements for the state children’s health insurance program**

Chair Gossage and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this letter of testimony in support of Senate Bill 45. Health Forward works to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems. We support this legislation as it protects Kansas children’s access to the program by updating federal poverty line eligibility levels.

SB 45 is important legislation. Kansas’ children’s health insurance program eligibility is currently pegged at 250% of poverty level in the year 2008. This means that over time eligibility standards erode, and fewer children qualify for the program. For example, 250% of poverty level in 2008 was about \$44,000 for a family of three; for that same family in 2023, that figure is about \$55,000, meaning fewer families qualify each year due to cost increases and no fault of their own. The proposed legislation updates the eligibility level by pegging it to 250% of poverty level in the year of eligibility determination.

Covering more kids in Kansas also helps reduce racial disparities in children’s health insurance coverage. According to data from Georgetown University, over 12% of Black children in Kansas receive coverage through the program even though they are just over 6% of the population. Updating the eligibility criteria will reduce the disparities in the uninsured rate for Black (8.8%) and Latino (4.8%) children, compared to their white counterparts (2.8%), according to data from KIDS COUNT.

Health Forward asks legislators on this committee to vote yes on SB 45. This legislation is important to help all Kansas kids have productive, healthy, and fulfilled lives. Please feel free to reach out to me at [nmadden@healthforward.org](mailto:nmadden@healthforward.org) if you have any questions or requests for additional information.

Respectfully,

Nathan J. Madden, Ph.D.  
Impact Strategist - Policy  
Health Forward Foundation

**OUR  
PURPOSE**

*Every day we work to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems.*