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TO: House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Chad Austin  
Senior Vice President, Government Relations

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 436

DATE: March 21, 2012

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of Senate Bill 436, which establishes the newborn screening fund.

Kansas hospitals play an important role in screening newborns for 29 metabolic and hearing disorders. KHA and its members believe that newborn screening is an important public health issue and that early detection improves the quality of life for affected newborns and reduces the long-term treatment and health care costs associated with these conditions. Each year in Kansas, over 40,000 newborns (of which, approximately 40 percent are Medicaid newborns) are screened for these disorders. Hospital staff and resources are used to collect the newborn blood samples which are then forwarded to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE) laboratory for analysis. KDHE reports these laboratory results to the primary care physician for appropriate follow up and treatment.

Currently, the newborn screening program is funded through the Children's Initiative Fund, which is financed with monies received through the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The funds obtained through this agreement are expected to decline over the next several years. Senate Bill 436 will create a stable funding stream that will utilize funds obtained through the managed care organization privilege fee. This revenue will provide the necessary funding to continue the current newborn screening program.

KHA and its members support the continuation of this vital screening program and urge the committee to favorably adopt Senate Bill 436. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.