

November 18, 2014

Hilary Gee, Director of Health Policy  
Kansas Action for Children

Testimony for Robert G. Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community  
Based Services and KanCare Oversight

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

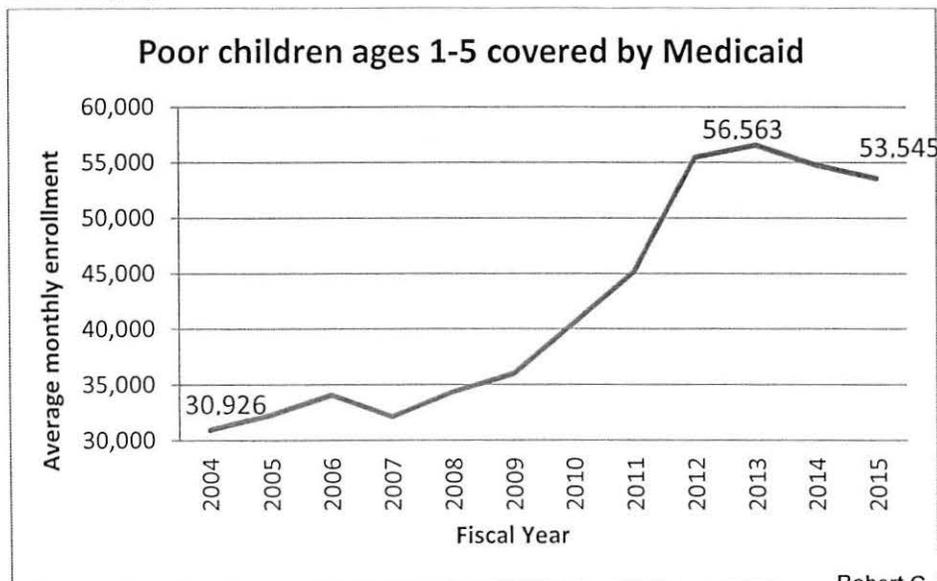
Kansas Action for Children appreciates the opportunity to reiterate our concerns about the impact of changes to the Medicaid program on the poorest children in Kansas.

As part of Kansas Action for Children's efforts to ensure all Kansas children grow up healthy, we closely monitor enrollment patterns in KanCare. More than 250,000 Kansas children rely on KanCare for their health care coverage. Previously, this Committee and Kansas Action for Children have made requests for enrollment and application data. KDHE has stated that they have plans to make more application and enrollment data accessible to the public in an online dashboard, however this will not be available for several years. It was our hope that additional data would allow stakeholders to understand varying trends between age groups and identify problems.

**With the available data, it is clear that young children are losing coverage.**

Enrollment of poor children in Medicaid has grown consistently for many years and this trend is reflected in various age groups of children. However, despite the overall increase in the number of children covered under KanCare through Medicaid and CHIP, the trends recently have varied by eligibility group.

*Following more than a decade of growth in all age groups, the enrollment of poor one- to five-year old children has been dropping since November 2012. To date, enrollment has dropped by more than 3,000; however if the trend of growth had continued, there would be 5,000 to 10,000 more children covered in this category.*



Data from Kansas Medical Assistance Report, FY2004-FY2015.



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**Additional outreach and data needed.**

Kansas Action for Children understands that some problems with enrollment may be attributable to factors outside of KDHE's control. But providing health care coverage to Kansas children is an investment in the future of the state – access to health care is especially important when children are young. *This trend has been continuing for more than two years, and it is essential to understand and correct problems as soon as possible.*

Families with children under age five are most likely to experience poverty and be eligible for safety net programs. In the past, applications for Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) were linked for efficiency in processing and to improve access for eligible families. However, the applications were separated in November, 2011 and several other administrative policy changes in recent years have decreased access to TANF. *It appears that the administrative policy changes to the TANF program may be negatively affecting Medicaid enrollment.*

Kansas Action for Children is calling on the administration to reverse this policy decision and to combine TANF and medical assistance applications once again. However, until that happens, it is essential to identify methods to promptly target outreach and enrollment to Kansas' most vulnerable families with young children. We are also calling on KDHE to provide monthly updates to the Medical Assistance Report so that it is possible to closely monitor these troubling trends related to children and health care coverage.