

Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine

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To: Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Vicki Whitaker, KAOM Executive Director

Subj: **Written Proponent Testimony on SB 252:** *Expanding medical assistance eligibility and implementing a health insurance plan reinsurance program.*

Chairman Suellentrop, Vice Chair Berger and members of the Committee:

The Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine (KAOM), founded in 1913, is the only association which represents osteopathic physicians and the osteopathic profession in Kansas. KAOM thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 252. This legislation will expand medical assistance eligibility and implement a health insurance plan reinsurance program.

Expanding Medicaid coverage in Kansas to the estimated 130,000 or more Kansans who would qualify will reap economic benefits for the state. Many of the Kansans who will be covered if SB 252 is passed are the working poor. Giving them medical insurance coverage will enable them to be healthier and avoid expensive emergency room treatment. Coverage through Medicaid expansion means they receive preventive health care and medication coverage at a much lower cost than treating them in a health crisis. Right now, many of those who would qualify if Medicaid is expanded must choose between paying their rent and feeding their families or paying for medical services and medication. These are the realities for those with limited incomes and no health insurance.

It is also important to note, this bill is a compromise. Work requirements, sunseting the expansion if the federal match drops, and payment of a small premium by those receiving expanded Medicaid in Kansas are some of the compromises in the legislation. The biggest winner of expanded Medicaid would be the State of Kansas. A healthy population means a strong workforce, and this is a powerful incentive when businesses consider whether to locate in Kansas.

In summary, without Medicaid expansion in Kansas, over 130,000 go without preventive health care services and medications. This considerable number of Kansans without health insurance translates into an unhealthy state. All Kansans foot the bill when the uninsured cannot. Medicaid expansion will equal a healthy and strong Kansas. This benefits all Kansans.

Thank you.