

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1602

January 31, 2020

Chairman Gene Suellentrop
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
300 SW 10th St.
Room 441-E
Topeka, KS 66612

Chairman Suellentrop,

I write today to urge against Medicaid expansion in Kansas. Expanding Medicaid would be harmful for Kansas as it has proven to be for other states.

Medicaid expansion would put the needs of the elderly and disabled behind able-bodied adults. Nearly 130,000 able-bodied adults are projected to be added to the taxpayer-funded government-run program¹, however, in states that have already expanded Medicaid, actual expansion enrollment exceeded projections. Taking this data into account, some projections estimate Kansas' expansion enrollment to be upward of 262,000.² Furthermore, almost half of the able-bodied adults who would be eligible under expansion are already insured.¹ Medicaid expansion would divert funds away from the truly vulnerable who depend on Medicaid to survive, including the thousands with disabilities on wait lists to receive care, to the benefit of able-bodied and already-insured individuals.

The lack of work requirements for Medicaid enrollment eligibility is problematic. Requiring enrollees earn below a certain income threshold, coupled with not setting requirements related to work or time limits for enrollees, Medicaid incentivizes enrollees to refrain from seeking gainful employment. As such, in expansion states, as high as 70% of able-bodied adult enrollees do not work at all.³ Promoting government dependency is an irresponsible and unsustainable plan to increase access to affordable healthcare for Kansans.

Expanding Medicaid will be costly for Kansan taxpayers. Without expansion, Medicaid currently consumes almost ¼ of Kansas' state budget and has a track record of failing to keep costs under

¹ https://www.khi.org/assets/uploads/news/14898/web_medicaid_expansion_updated_estimates.pdf

² <https://thefga.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/How-the-ObamaCare-dependency-crisis-could-get-even-worse-%E2%80%94-and-how-to-stop-it-1-15-18.pdf>

³ <https://thefga.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MedEx-Not-Working-Paper.pdf>

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control; since 2000, the percentage of total Kansas state expenditures taken up by Medicaid has almost tripled.⁴ The total gross cost to the state of new enrollees is projected to be \$1.2 billion over 10 years. While this number alone is alarming, the cost to Kansans for expanding Medicaid will almost certainly exceed projections as enrollment rates and costs have exceeded projections by more than double in current expansion states.²

I support the Kansas state legislature's intent to increase access to affordable healthcare for Kansans and encourage Kansas lawmakers to pursue responsible policy that has proven to effectively reduce costs and increase access to care. I urge the legislature to consider the negative impact Medicaid expansion has had on other states and not expand the taxpayer-funded government-run healthcare program. Kansans deserve health policy that incentivizes self-sufficiency and fosters truly affordable healthcare.

Sincerely,



Steve Watkins
Member of Congress

⁴ <https://thefga.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Medicaid-Pac-Man-Paper-2.pdf>