



Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION

To: Members of the Kansas Senate

From: Tom Bell
President and CEO

Chad Austin
Senior Vice President, Government Relations

Date: March 29, 2019

Re: Medicaid Expansion

On behalf of our 125 Kansas community hospital members, we are writing you in regards to the recent Senate Republican Leadership proposal to conduct an interim study on Medicaid expansion over the summer and fall, instead of addressing Medicaid expansion during the 2019 Session.

Requesting an interim on Medicaid expansion may have made sense five years ago when these discussions began. The few states that expanded Medicaid as soon as the law allowed were just starting out and it was unclear what types of alternative policies would be allowed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Now, five years later, 36 states and the District of Columbia have expanded Medicaid. We know which program components have been approved, which have been rejected, and which have been implemented successfully. We also have learned from other states how best to estimate the utilization of the program and what the costs and costs savings will likely be.

In the five years since Medicaid expansion went into effect under the ACA, the Kansas Legislature has held numerous hearings on expansion, received hundreds of pieces of testimony, and engaged in hours of round-table discussions. In addition, organizations like the Kansas Health Institute have held forums engaging experts from all over the country in discussing the impacts and options for expansion. It is our opinion that the topic of Medicaid expansion has been excessively discussed and the time is now that a floor vote on expansion should occur.

We do not need another interim on Medicaid expansion for the Senate to debate and vote on House Bill 2066. One of the criticisms that we have heard from some Senators is the need for “their own” plan. In fact, this bill is nearly identical to the version passed in 2017, House Bill 2044, which 25 Senators voted in favor of. House Bill 2066 contains many of the same provisions as House Bill 2044 that many of your own colleagues recommended:

- a work referral,
- a premium assistance program to help those with private insurance maintain their insurance,
- provisions requiring the state track savings and revenues to determine if the program funds itself, and if it does not, requiring providers to develop non-SGF funding solutions for the program, and
- a poison pill ending the program if the federal match falls below 90 percent.

House Bill 2066 is even more of a Republican plan than the bill passed two years ago in that an amendment was added by Representative Troy Waymaster that requires premium payments from Medicaid expansion beneficiaries, further offsetting program costs and adding “skin in the game” for the recipients.

If Senate Leadership feels that two additional days are necessary to understanding House Bill 2066 and recommend any additional changes, then the break during the April recess is the perfect opportunity to do so. This issue is too critical for

our state to delay action until the 2020 legislative session. The Kansas Hospital Association and other supporters are readily available to assist in providing information, resources and engagement in discussions about an expansion plan that works for Kansas.

We look forward to the Senate Leadership allowing a floor vote on this important topic. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.