
KANSAS CITY

**MEDICAL SOCIETY
FOUNDATION**

CHARITABLE CARE, EDUCATION, PREVENTION & WELLNESS

**Testimony in Support of SB252
Kansas Innovative Solutions for Affordable Healthcare Act
January 19, 2020**

The Kansas City Medical Society Foundation is the charitable arm of the Kansas City Medical Society. We operate the Wy Jo Care charitable care program serving uninsured residents of Wyandotte and Johnson counties in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Wy Jo Care has been in existence since 2007. We also operate a companion charitable care program, Metro Care, that serves the Missouri portion of greater Kansas City. Through our charitable care programs, Kansas City physicians, partner hospitals and allied providers donate over \$8 million in specialty care for uninsured individuals each year.

We do this out of concern for those who would otherwise forego needed care because they do not have health insurance. As physicians, our life's work is dedicated to healing and keeping people healthy. It is disheartening to see patients who delay seeing the doctor or decline treatment because they don't have insurance and can't afford to pay for care. We are putting our concern into action through donating charitable care. It is a way we can make a difference.

Yet our charitable care makes only a small impact on the total access to care problem. There are more than 70,000 uninsured people in Wyandotte and Johnson counties (MARC). In 2018, our charitable care program served over 600 residents of the two counties. Many of those without insurance are working families that earn too much to qualify for KanCare, but earn too little to be able to afford insurance or be part of an employer-sponsored plan.

Expanding KanCare as proposed in SB252 provides Kansas with a special opportunity to help close this coverage gap. And the federal government will pay for 90% of it. Expanding KanCare will:

- Enable more people to get health care when they need it.
- Make it possible for physicians to intervene earlier in the disease process—in many cases before conditions worsen and require more extensive and expensive treatment, or possibly become fatal.

Every day, we physicians see first-hand the pain of those who lack access to care. The patient who waited too long to have diabetes treatment and now faces an amputation or vision loss. Cancer that has reached stage IV because proper screening wasn't done.

Thousands of Kansas citizens are suffering because of the inability to afford health care. We must take action to protect the health and welfare of our fellow Kansans.

We urge you to support this potentially lifesaving legislation.

Stephen Salanski, MD
Chair, Board of Directors