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**Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee
Opponent for SB 501
March 10, 2022**

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in opposition to SB 501. My name is Tanya Dorf Brunner, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas, Inc. We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong dental health by shaping policy and educating the public, so Kansans know that all mouths matter.

We stand in opposition to SB 501 for three reasons.

1. The bill will introduce unnecessary red tape for Kansans living in poverty in order to access the basic needs of food and healthcare. The administrative hurdles this bill adds are overly burdensome and appear to be designed to make it harder for people to access food and healthcare. For example, the bill would require people to report any changes in their household within 10 days. If a family experienced a death, they would have an extremely short window to report the death in order to keep their food assistance. We all know the trauma of loss and understand that people need time to work through all the logistics while managing grief. Adding the threat of losing food assistance and Medicaid during that time would be a thoughtless burden on families at a difficult time.
2. In order to implement the provisions of the bill, the state will need to add more staff and infrastructure because the logistics of managing a more complicated application process for food assistance and Medicaid is significant. After a few years of Medicaid application backlogs, the state is now caught up and operating the eligibility process efficiently. Adding more layers of complexity not only hurts individual Kansans it also jeopardizes the smooth operation of the state's food assistance and Medicaid eligibility process. It is hard to see how this bill could possibly be cost efficient.
3. People living in poverty face stresses most of us can only imagine. The process to apply for food assistance and Medicaid is not easy now, and SB 501 proposes to make the process much more difficult. When people's basic needs like access to nutritious food preventive health and dental care are met, they are able to work on higher level needs like reliable employment.

SB 501 will create unnecessary government red tape, cost the state money by adding to the government infrastructure, and add more stress to families already in a state of high and chronic stress. We urge the committee to oppose SB 501.

I am happy to provide additional information or answer committee questions.

Sincerely,

Tanya Dorf Brunner
Executive Director

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