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**House Committee on Health and Human Services
SB 271 Proponent
March 3, 2026**

Chairman Carpenter and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in support of SB 271. 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 oral health by shaping policy and educating the public.

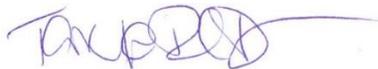
Kansas is the only state with statutory language that refers to a specific year for federal poverty level for CHIP. Other programs referenced in Kansas statute do not tie the federal poverty level to a specific year. This statute is the exception, and it is time to fix it. For more than a dozen years this error in the statute has resulted in countless children losing their eligibility for CHIP. Since 2022 there have been temporary budget provisos to fix this unintended statutory error, but a permanent fix is needed to ensure children who are eligible for CHIP have consistent access to their coverage.

Dental disease is nearly 100% preventable, but childhood caries (cavities) is the most common chronic childhood disease. Routine access to dental care is critical to keeping kids healthy and avoiding the loss of learning time in schools due to dental pain. According to a National Institutes of Health report, **CHIP enrollees did better across nearly all oral health measures than children who are uninsured.** This report finds that "enrolling eligible uninsured children in CHIP led to improvements in their access to preventive dental care, as well as reductions in their unmet dental care needs."¹

CHIP provides necessary preventive, restorative, and live-saving dental care for Kansas children. The current law in Kansas leads to eligible Kansas children being found ineligible for CHIP, even though federal regulations say they are eligible. Fixing the error in statute will ensure all children who are eligible for CHIP have access to that care. We urge the committee to pass SB 271.

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

Thank you for your consideration,



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¹ National Institutes of Health, "[How Well Is CHIP Addressing Oral Health Care Needs and Access for Children?](#)" 2015