

*Coordinating health & health care  
for a thriving Kansas*



March 17, 2008

The Honorable Susan Wagle  
Chairperson, Senate Health Care Strategies  
Statehouse Room 221 East  
Topeka Kansas 66612

Re: Testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 1618

Dear Senator Wagle:

Today the Kansas Health Policy Authority is offering neutral testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 1618. As the leading state agency on health, health care, and health policy, KHPA is committed to ensuring Kansans have access to quality, affordable, and sustainable health care. The current trends related to health care are alarming with our health care system growing at a rate much faster than the rest of the economy. Total health expenditures in the United States doubled between 1990 and 2004, reaching \$6,280 per capita in 2004. In 2006 health care expenditures accounted for 16.5 % of the Gross Domestic Product, far outpacing any other country and estimates indicate that the United States will devote 20% of GDP to health care by 2015. These ever escalating health care costs are a primary factor contributing to the growing number of adults and children lacking health insurance in our state. Currently some 300,000 Kansans are uninsured, resulting in costly delays in accessing needed health care services.

The current health care system in Kansas faces many challenges. The health system is inefficient and fragmented and the health status of many Kansans is at risk. Fundamental transformation of our underlying health system is required to address the staggering rise in health care costs and chronic disease as well as the underinvestment in the coordination of health care. The incidence of chronic disease is escalating across the nation and the costs for treating the illnesses and disabilities of those individuals account for more than 70% of total medical care costs, including nearly 80% of Medicaid expenditures. A fundamental change in our skewed health care system must occur with increased focus both on the prevention of chronic disease as well as implementation of more effective disease management strategies.

We must explore new solutions to solving the cost, quality, and access issues facing the citizens of our state. Serious consideration must be given to investigating new ways of delivering and financing health care in Kansas so that we obtain value for the health care dollars.

Rm. 900-N, Landon Building, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1220

[www.khpa.ks.gov](http://www.khpa.ks.gov)

Medicaid and HealthWave:

Phone: 785-296-3981  
Fax: 785-296-4813

State Employee Health

Benefits and Plan Purchasing:  
Phone: 785-368-6361  
Fax: 785-368-7180

State Self Insurance Fund:

Phone: 785-296-2364  
Fax: 785-296-6995

The Honorable Susan Wagle  
Testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 1618  
Page Two

Health care is delivered locally and states need to have the flexibility to develop health care policy that ensures better value for the dollars spent. The federal government, however, must facilitate the process as states endeavor to correct the flaws in our fragmented health system, improve access to the full array of health services, and control costs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marcia Nielsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marcia" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Nielsen".

Marcia Nielsen, PhD., MPH  
Executive Director

cc: Senate Health Care Strategies Committee Members