



September 21, 2017

Senator Pat Roberts
Senator Jerry Moran
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senators,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Kansas Coordination Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services (SICC). The SICC is an advisory group based in both state and federal law. This council is responsible for advising and assisting the Kansas governor and legislature on matters that impact Kansas families with children, ages birth to five who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays and to ensure that a comprehensive service delivery system of integrated services is available in Kansas for these children.

I am writing regarding the Graham-Cassidy Health Care Bill. As the Senate considers the repeal and replacement of the American Health Care Act, I urge you to stand firm for the protections that all Americans should have, and specifically safeguards for young children with disabilities and their families.

As you know some children are born with conditions/disabilities that will be life-long challenges. We must protect these children with pre-existing health conditions. Insurance companies should not be able to discriminate, be able to deny coverage, or assess increased premiums for individuals with pre-existing conditions or disabilities. We must be in a position to promote the well-being and health of young children with disabilities.

We must protect Medicaid. Early intervention programs for infants and toddlers and preschool special education programs rely on Medicaid to meet the needs of young children with disabilities and fulfill the promises and obligations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Services such as speech, physical and occupational therapy, or other medical supports provided in early intervention and educational settings are critical to overall developmental progress of many children. By initiating a block grant system with an annual per-capita cap, that disappears in 2027, will impact and may well devastate these services, greatly diminish their effectiveness, and foster additional costs in the future.

Finally, health care insurers must be held to the "essential health benefits", including prenatal/maternity care, so children are born healthy and that health care plans are just that - health care - not empty promises that only provide access and not real health care.

The Council requests that you give consideration to these issues as you deliberate and make a decision regarding your vote. The Council asks that you keep the wellbeing of young Kansans and their families in the forefront and act on their behalf with the same consideration you would give to your family members.

Sincerely
Matt Connell
Chair, Kansas Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services