

RE: KABC testimony for 2025 KDADS Stakeholder Budget Hearing

Dear Secretary Howard,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. KABC is a nonprofit organization committed to improving long-term care for older Kansans. With over 20% of our state's population projected to be 65 or older by 2030, Kansas must invest in responsive, efficient systems that ensure timely access to care and support quality outcomes. We recognize budget constraints and offer the following recommendations to improve performance and protect the well-being of vulnerable Kansans.

**1) Budget Enhancement for the HCBS Frail Elderly Waiver**

Projected shortfalls of \$27M in FY26 and \$70M in FY27 jeopardize access to critical in-home services. A waitlist for the Frail Elderly waiver would worsen our already low ranking of 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation for low care residents living in facilities and would contribute to a more rapid decline in health for older Kansans waiting for help. We recommend a request for adequate funding essential to avoid a FE waitlist, and the associated premature institutionalization of older Kansans.

**2) Community Care Coordination Service for the Medicaid waiver populations**

Despite the support and a commitment of \$20M, the community care coordination service for Medicaid populations remains uncertain. Frail Elderly, Physically Disabled, and Brain Injury waiver recipients currently lack a case management or troubleshooting support to help vulnerable Kansans navigate a complex system. We urge KDADS to maintain that financial commitment and prioritize implementation of this long-overdue service to support access to care and improved system effectiveness.

**3) Budget Enhancement for Increased KDADS Surveyor Staff**

Surveyor vacancies remain alarmingly high, near 50%. This delays facility inspections and weakens protections for Kansas nursing facility residents. We support increased funding to address the wage gap (currently over \$17,000 less than RN median pay) and recommend exploring other potential solutions such as multi-disciplinary staffing models to strengthen oversight and enforcement of this industry.

**4) Personal Needs Allowance Enhancement**

The current \$62 personal needs allowance for residents of nursing homes is lower than three of its bordering States and lower than the National average of \$70. Residents who depend on this allowance struggle to afford common items such as undergarments and services such as haircuts. We support an increase in this monthly allowance and recommend tying future adjustments to established cost of living adjustments, (COLA).

**5) Statewide Resource Guide for Older Kansans- \$150,000**

Following the success of the last session's appropriation, ongoing support is needed to maintain and annually distribute this essential guide statewide. Continued investment will ensure older Kansans have access to trusted, current information on care and services.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important proposal.

Sincerely,

*Daniel Goodman*

Daniel Goodman

Executive Director, Kansas Advocates for Better Care