



To: House Social Services Budget Committee

From: Shawn Sullivan, President/CEO of Midland Care Connection, Inc.

Date: February 23, 2021

RE: Neutral Testimony on HB 2249

Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on HB 2249, which would set the protected income level for persons receiving home and community-based services at 150% of federal supplemental security income (SSI). We are supportive of the effort to tie the income level to SSI, but believe the threshold should be set at a higher level similar to most other states as the current level is a barrier to entry to home and community based services that serve as an alternative to long-term care facilities.

Our organization is one of three PACE providers in Kansas and a unique not-for-profit integrated community care organization whose aim is to improve the quality of life for our aging population and to keep seniors at home and independent. Midland Care provides care and services to more than 1,600 people daily across 21 counties in Northeast Kansas. The post-acute and home-based services we provide include PACE, hospice, home health, meals on wheels, palliative care, adult day care and grief and loss counseling services.

The Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) model is centered on the belief that it is better for the well-being of seniors with chronic care needs and their families to be served in the community whenever possible. PACE serves individuals who are age 55 or older, certified by their state to need nursing home care, able to live safely in the community at the time of enrollment, and live in a PACE service area. While all PACE participants must be certified to need nursing home care to enroll in PACE, only about 5 percent of PACE participants nationally reside in a nursing home. If a PACE enrollee needs nursing home care, the PACE program pays for it and continues to coordinate the enrollee's care.

The increase passed by the Legislature in 2018 that changed the protected income limit (PIL) from \$747 to \$1,177 per month positively impacted the access for vulnerable adults on Medicaid and at risk for nursing home placement. However, the current PIL of \$1,177 per month is still a significant barrier to PACE access for many individuals on Medicaid that are functionally eligible for nursing homes. The State's PACE programs advocate for an increase of the PIL to 300% of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is where most states have their PIL. Even after the increase of the PIL to 150% of SSI in 2019, there have been 50 potential PACE participants of Midland Care, 61 potential participants of Ascension Living Hope and 8 potential participants of Bluestem PACE that have chosen not to enroll into PACE due to the participant obligation the PIL creates. These 119 individuals have decided to not enroll into PACE

in the last year are at a significantly higher risk for more costly nursing home stays and other Medicaid services.