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Chairman Concannon and members of the House Committee on Children and Seniors, thank you for the opportunity to appear on behalf of the KanCare Advocates Network (KAN). KAN is a coalition of nearly 40 organizations and individuals. Together, we advocate on behalf of the 400,000 Kansans who depend upon the Kansas Medicaid program, KanCare, and its seven HCBS waiver programs for their health care and long-term supports and services.

We have closely monitored the problems with timely processing of eligibility applications, particularly for the elderly and disabled populations. We have heard from consumers who could not get the health care, medications and/or long term supports and services they needed because of the months' long backlog of applications. Our provider partners have often testified about the financial strain caused by ineffective administrative processes.

We support any effort to hold State contractors accountable and compliant with state and federal regulations and laws. Perhaps imposing a daily fine, as proposed in HB 2149, is the incentive needed for compliance until the State moves the process back in house. However, we can not support a proposal which favors one provider group over another.

As written, HB 2149 risks prioritizing applications for nursing home eligibility above all others. It is also unusual to have a business entity empowered under State law to collect such fines. Penalty funds should be returned to the State and properly appropriated by the legislature and the governor.

For those reasons, we ask this committee to consider the attached amendment which creates a special fee fund within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Funds collected through this process could be used for training for direct care workers in both institutional settings and through home and community based providers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued oversight of the KanCare program. We ask that you support our amendment.

Sean Gatewood, KAN co-administrator