



**An independent voice for
those served by KanCare.**

Barb Conant / 785 383-4272
baconant@hotmail.com

Sean Gatewood / 785 220-5355
seangatewood@outlook.com

Sept. 28, 2020

Chairman Landwehr and members of the Robert G. (Bob) Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The KanCare Advocates Network is a coalition of more than 50 organizations and individuals who advocate on behalf of and serve Kansans who depend upon KanCare and its seven Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver programs for their health care and long-term supports and services.

We testified at your committee's last meeting in June about the need for ongoing and easily accessible site-specific information related to outbreaks in Kansas, especially those in large workplace settings and adult care homes. At that time, we urged State and local officials to make COVID-19-related data public, accessible and timely.

KAN is pleased that this information was recently added to the Kansas Department of Health & Environment's COVID-19 website. KAN appreciates Gov. Kelly and her administration making this critical information a priority and available to the public. We recognize and appreciate the State's diligence to assure the data is correct and current.

Kansans now can see where cluster outbreaks are occurring, updated weekly. With the posting of this information, Kansas joins the majority of states that make this information public. Making decisions during a time of crisis is difficult but for older adults and those who live in group settings, those decisions can have life and death consequences. Knowing where there are outbreaks of the virus arms the public with a critical tool for making healthy, safe and informed choices.

The importance of diverting people away from congregate settings and the critical nature of access to long term supports and services provided in the community is clear. We must be able to rely on transparent, reliable and publicly available data to make informed and safe decisions about the risks associated with where we go, who we have contact with and how we plan for the next wave of the virus. This information is central to the decisions we make that affect our own health and safety and those with whom we live, work and socialize.

Thank you for your continued support in improving the lives of Kansans served by the KanCare program.