



Feb. 3, 2016

Chairman Hawkins and members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services. I am Mitzi McFatrigh, executive director of Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC). I appreciate the opportunity to come before the committee in support of HB 2058/the Kansas Lay Caregiver Act. KABC, a non-profit organization, is beholden to no commercial interests; supported almost entirely by citizen contributions in support of our mission to improve the quality of long-term care. KABC does not provide any form of direct care or receive any government money reimbursement. KABC is an established resource for older adults on long-term care issues. Those seeking our guidance and assistance are primarily elders and their families facing difficult, life-altering decisions.

The passage of HB 2058 will benefit Kansans of all ages, but its provisions provide elders with additional assurance of continued care when they are discharged from a hospital setting. Caregivers play critical roles in keeping elders from being readmitted to the hospital or ultimately needing skilled nursing care.

Chances are good that all of us will care for a family member, neighbor or friend following a hospital stay. It's also very likely that all of us will need the help of family, neighbors and friends at some point in our lives. Establishing a consistent process for identifying a patient's caregiver upon hospital admission and notifying that person upon discharge increases the potential of a good health outcome. Communicating aftercare details with both the patient and the caregiver adds to the likelihood of a good outcome.

Persons over the age of 65 are more likely to live alone; a fact that increases as we age. According to an American Community Survey ([www.kansashealthmatters.org](http://www.kansashealthmatters.org)), almost 24% of Kansans over age 65 lived alone between 2006-2010. As our citizens age, we can expect this number to increase. Administration on Aging data shows that almost half, 46%, of all persons over the age of 75 live alone. Those who live alone are at risk for limited access to support or inadequate assistance in emergency situations. Coordination of post-hospital discharge care is especially critical for these people.

HB 2058 establishes a process consistent among hospitals across the state to assure that Kansas elders have the opportunity to designate a caregiver who will be notified upon transfer or discharge and educated about their post-discharge needs. It is common sense policy that costs little and has the potential for significant savings in reducing hospital readmissions and improved health outcomes for our elders.

We should not leave care for elders after they are discharged or transferred from hospitals to chance. KABC supports the new language drafted between AARP-KS and the Kansas Hospital Association and encourages the House Committee on Health and Human Services to pass HB 2058 as amended.

913 Tennessee Suite 2 Lawrence, Kansas 66044-6904  
phone: 785.842.3088 fax: 785.749.0029 toll-free: 800.525.1782 e-mail: [info@kabc.org](mailto:info@kabc.org) website: [www.kabc.org](http://www.kabc.org)

913 Tennessee Suite 2 Lawrence, Kansas 66044-6904  
*phone:* 785.842.3088 *fax:* 785.749.0029 *toll-free:* 800.525.1782 *e-mail:* [info@kabc.org](mailto:info@kabc.org) *website:* [www.kabc.org](http://www.kabc.org)