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TESTIMONY: SB 218 (Proponent)

Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee

February 18, 2015

Presented by: Doug Gruenbacher, MD, President

Sen. Pilcher-Cook & Members of the Committee:

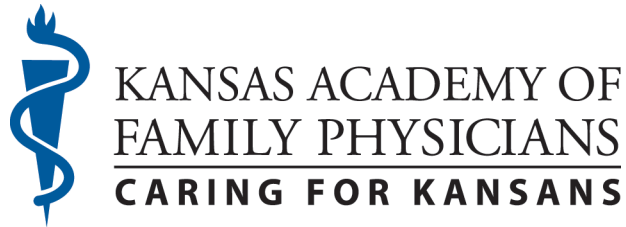
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 218, on behalf of the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians (KAFP).

About KAFP & family medicine: KAFP represents more than 1,560 practicing, resident and medical student members from across this great state. The mission of KAFP is to promote access to, and excellence in, health care for all Kansans through education and advocacy for family physicians and their patients. *Quality health care and positive health outcomes for our patients guide our public policy work.* As family physicians, we see people of all ages, both men and women, and we work with almost every type of ailment and illness that afflict our patients. I am a board certified family physician in private practice in Quinter, Kansas.

Task Force: Members of our Academy worked closely with the Kansas Medical Society, of which I am also a member, on a Task Force that met with the APRN group several times since the 2014 legislative session. We had a very open exchange of concepts and concerns. The presenting concern of the APRN representatives and the central reason they gave for wanting their proposed legislation were cases where physicians were not providing appropriate oversight under the collaborative agreements we now have under Kansas law. We offered to explore that more and find ways to address it. At that point, they told us they wanted more – they wanted to do away with the collaborative practice agreements altogether and practice independently of physicians.

When we began meeting, it was in an attempt to find compromise between our groups. However, we were told by the APRNs at the table that they wanted their bill, in its entirety and without amendments.

Following that we offered that if they indeed wanted to engage in the practice of medicine, rather than nursing, then they should move to the regulatory oversight of the Kansas Board of Healing Arts (KBOHA). That is the entity charged under Kansas' law to oversee procedures and practices that constitute the practice of medicine. It's



important to note that this would not be unprecedented, as KBOHA oversees other practitioners than medical doctors, including physicians' assistants.

That was flatly rejected by the APRN group and they reiterated there was no room for compromise on their end; they wanted the legislation they had proposed.

Process: That is how we came to stand behind KMS in support of SB 218. It establishes a joint committee, equally represented by appointees of the Board of Nursing and the Board of Healing Arts. This joint committee would lead the consideration and development of joint regulations regarding APRN licensure and scope of practice.

We believe this is fair and reasonable compromise that offers the best protection for patients in our state. Through the process offered in SB 218, the issues would be dealt with in the regulatory arena, rather than the legislative arena. Appointees from each Board would sit down to dialogue together, and have the opportunity to come to a mutually agreed regulatory structure to protect patient safety and address concerns of both groups.

Recommendation: For all these reasons, on behalf of the members of the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians, I urge you to support SB 218.

Thank you again for this opportunity to communicate our thoughts about this important discussion. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Gruenbacher".

Doug Gruenbacher, MD
President