

Testimony of McPherson County Health Department to the
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
Proponent for SB 404
February 8, 2024

Dear Chairperson Gossage and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this proponent testimony on SB 404.

This bill would define “Expedited Partner Therapy” (EPT) in Kansas and provide an additional tool to clinicians in the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STI). According to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Kansas would join 46 other States that allow EPT.

EPT is the clinical practice of treating the sexual partners of patients that have been diagnosed with a STI by providing medications to the patient to take to their partners without the healthcare provider examining the partner first. STI rates have increased over the past decade and it is time to add this clinical tool to the healthcare provider toolbox.

If SB 404 would have been in effect the last 12 months, McPherson County Health Department would have been able to provide EPT to at least 14 patients that came to our clinic and tested positive for chlamydia or gonorrhea, which is assuming out of the 14 individuals that tested positive each one only had one sexual partner that was at risk. Oftentimes, patients report more than one sexual partner that needs to follow up for treatment.

SB 404 will break barriers we as healthcare providers face routinely. Stigma surrounding STIs oftentimes prevents people from seeking testing and treatment, which in turn creates a bigger health risk. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), untreated STIs can lead to neurological and cardiovascular disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirths, and increased risk of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIH), women who have an STI may experience complications like pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, tubal or ectopic pregnancy, cervical cancer, and perinatal or congenital infections in infants born to infected mothers.

I ask the Committee to support SB 404 and continue to break barriers by supporting Kansas healthcare providers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shalei Shea".

Shalei Shea RN BSN
Director, Health Officer
McPherson County Health Department