



To: Representative Sean Tarwater, Chair and Members, House Commerce Committee

From: Kylee Childs, Director of Government Affairs, LeadingAge Kansas

Date: 3/5/2025

LeadingAge Kansas is the state association for not-for-profit and mission-focused aging services. We have 150 member organizations across Kansas, which include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living, home plus, senior housing, low-income housing, home health agencies, home and community-based service programs, PACE and Meals on Wheels. Our members serve more than 25,000 older Kansans each day and employ more than 20,000 people across the state.

Proponent Testimony on HB2392

I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 2392, which provides critical support for adult care home providers by addressing a bottleneck in our workforce pipeline. By addressing educational standards for nursing instructors HB2392 ensures that adult care homes have access to highly qualified staff, addressing both the immediate shortage of nursing professionals and the long-term sustainability of care services for the growing elderly population in Kansas.

Modifying the Nurse Practice Act for Faculty Requirements

The Kansas Board of Nursing currently maintains that all nursing educators for a Registered Nursing program must possess a master's degree to teach, regardless of whether it is an associate's degree at a community college or a bachelor's degree. While we respect their commitment to high educational standards, a master's degree does not automatically equate to an ability to effectively teach. Nurses with master's degrees can often earn significantly higher salaries working directly in the field, making recruitment of more faculty in nursing programs extremely difficult. In restricting nursing faculty to master's degrees, we are bottlenecking our nursing workforce pipeline without necessarily improving or upholding the quality of nursing education.

Master's Degree Faculty Not Required by Kansas Law or Kansas Board of Regents

The Board of Nursing may reference their decision based on accreditation standards. However, the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) faculty requirements, which outline faculty requirements in registered nursing programs at community colleges, defers to state laws and regulations. This means if the Board of Nursing were to change the regulations for faculty requirements or we passed this legislation, it would not jeopardize accreditation for our state's community colleges.

Master's degree faculty are also not required by the Kansas Board of Regents.

For coordinated institutions accredited through the Kansas Board of Regents, 88-26-2(b)(2)(A) states:

Each faculty member shall possess an academic degree that is relevant to what the individual is teaching and that is at least one level above the level at which the individual is teaching. Alternatively, for each

faculty member employed based on equivalent experience, the institution shall establish criteria for minimum equivalent experience that will be used in the appointment process.

For private postsecondary minimum requirement rules and regulations, 88-28-2(a)(17) states:

Each faculty member's minimum academic credential shall be at least one degree-level above the degree being taught, unless other credentials are typically used in lieu of the academic degree in a particular field of study. In those cases, qualifications may be measured by technical certifications, relevant professional experience, professional certifications, creative activity, training, or licensure, or any combination of these. The institution shall provide documentation that all faculty appointments meet these standards.

It is important to note that this bill would allow nursing programs to employ bachelor's degree faculty in associate's degree nursing programs – but it does not require them to do so. Colleges will remain free to restrict themselves to master's degree faculty and continue their current recruitment efforts unchanged.

States That Have Acted

Five states—Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Missouri—already utilize similar faculty educational requirements, only requiring instructors to hold one degree above what is being taught. This bill aligns Kansas with these best practices, helping attract skilled educators while maintaining high standards for nursing education.

We strongly advocate for aligning the nurse faculty regulations with the Kansas Board of Regents' policy, which requires faculty to hold one degree higher than the level they are teaching. This adjustment would open up opportunities for more qualified individuals to enter the teaching profession and help address part of the growing workforce pipeline issues in Kansas. It is essential that we create pathways for more educators, allowing colleges to expand their nursing programs and ultimately increase the number of nurses available in our state.

We kindly request you support this legislation, which strengthens our adult care home workforce.

Thank you for your consideration.