



To: Senate Utilities Committee

From: Chad Austin, Senior Vice President, Government Relations

Jennifer Findley, Senior Director of Education

Date: February 14, 2012

Re: SB 398

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the 126 community hospitals that we represent regarding Senate Bill 398. The benefits provided to Kansas hospitals by Kan-ed, such as access to a reliable, secure network for telemedicine and access to educational resources for staff/patient education, have been tremendous. We want to ensure the future sustainability of these services.

The rural nature of our state coupled with the anticipated health care workforce shortages in future years makes expanding telemedicine programs in Kansas imperative. Telemedicine allows patients in rural communities to access specialized physicians without time consuming and costly travel. Kan-ed has jump started expansion of telemedicine by enabling many hospitals to take advantage of the benefits provided by using video conferencing equipment. With just the click of a few buttons, you can have a consult scheduled and ready to go. The network management services provided by Kan-ed ensures that outages do not happen, everyone can interface with each other and video traffic gets prioritized. In addition, technical assistance is provided to end users. As we have seen in the past, if telemedicine becomes difficult and/or complicated, hospitals and physicians will not participate.

Suggested Amendment

To clarify that hospitals may use the Kan-ed program for telemedicine consultation, we are requesting to amend Senate Bill 398 to specify that the “network services” provided could be used for distance learning *and telemedicine*. Therefore, we would suggest the following amendment:

Page 1, Sec. 2, lines 24-29: From and after January 1, 2014, K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 75-7223 is hereby amended to read as follows: 75-7223. ~~(a)~~ The purpose of this act is to ~~provide for~~ *assist schools, libraries and hospitals to connect to* a broadband technology-based network to which schools, libraries and hospitals may connect for broadband internet access and intranet access for distance learning **and telemedicine**.

Thank you for consideration of our comments. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need additional information.