Testimony For the Kansas House Health and Human Services Committee

Madame Chair,

My name is Gary Haulmark and I work for Cerner Corporation, we are located in North Kansas City and have over 5,000 associates worldwide.   Approximately 1,000 of our associates live in the State of Kansas. It is an honor and privilege for us to appear before you today in favor of this legislation.

As a citizen of Kansas I applaud the sponsors of the bill for seeing the need and benefit of a near real-time automated and electronic disease reporting system here in Kansas. We believe Cerner can help. After the terrorist attack of 9-11, Cerner developed product or as we say solution called HealthSentry. This solution can automatically alert state officials whenever patients test positive for deadly diseases that are considered potential bioterrorist weapons, such as anthrax or the plague. The system will also quickly identify outbreaks of infectious diseases, from food borne illnesses to influenza.

Below are some benefits of HealthSentry:

- Connects public health to health providers by providing near real-time electronic communicable disease reporting and assists in the identification of potential outbreaks or bioterrorism events
- Allows for importing data into existing systems and reduces much of the required manual data entry
  Shortens outbreak detection/identification cycle dramatically by improving the timeliness of communicable disease reports
- Increases the volume of reporting and reduces under-reporting of many diseases
- Improves the quality of data collected by increasing the completeness of required fields
- Provides automatic alerting to key individuals and agencies for critical events (i.e. identification of potential bioterrorism agents)
- Provides detailed reports for trend analysis
- Provides de-identified laboratory orders information to assist in earlier detection of potential outbreaks or bioterrorism events
- Can provide reports simultaneously to numerous, authorized jurisdictions
- Provides aggregate reports back to contributing providers/hospitals

Since 9-11, the Federal government through Homeland Security and various other agencies has provided grants to the states worth billions of dollars to identify, defend against and prepare for a potential terrorist event. Since March 1 of 2003, $4.4 billion has bee available. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has and is providing Health Alert Network (HAN) funding to all 50 states as part of an effort to create a nationwide, integrated information and communications system.

Last year the State of Missouri purchased HealthSentry with a CDC grant. The City of Kansas City, Missouri has had HealthSentry up and running for more than a year now and they are seeing great results. In a one year period the city has seen infectious disease reports shoot up. They have also found that the system reports lab results that doctors and hospitals often fail to manually report.

A study conducted by the KCMO Health Dept. and published by a CDC journal, found some interesting results from the Kansas City Metropolitan Area Initiative. The study looked the first 200 days of the initiative and found data was received more quickly than with conventional reporting methods and that the data was more complete in all demographic fields. The results showed that electronic reporting of disease can offer substantial benefits to public health.

Below are the risks to Kansas's citizens without a near real-time automated and electronic communicable disease reporting system, as called for in this legislation. Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today.

- Reliance on manual reporting and data entry can take valuable resources away from other communicable disease response or prevention activities
- Less timely and incomplete reports can lead to delayed detection of outbreaks or potential bioterrorism events
- Unreported or delayed reporting of disease can lead to increased risk for further spread and subsequent outbreaks
- Without automated alerts, disease reporting of critical or significant events relies solely on manual processes