



KANSAS CHAPTER

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

TESTIMONY HB 2199
COMMITTEE on FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
February 19, 2013

Chairman Siegfried and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2199. The Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics represents 90% of the practicing pediatricians in the state. The Chapter is very much in opposition to Section 9 of the bill which prohibits the discussion and inquiry by physicians, except for psychiatrist, about firearms in a patient's home or property. Discussion of safety issues is standard of care for pediatricians. As part of a discussion of safety for children, pediatricians and other primary care providers must ask about potentially dangerous substances and objects in the home, which would include firearms, in order to provide injury prevention information to the family.

This can be very important if a child or a member of the family is suffering from depression or other mental disorders as we have seen all too often recently. Psychiatrists are not the only physicians that treat these problems. This is especially true with depression where primary care providers including pediatricians frequently diagnose and manage this disorder. Again, standard of care requires that counseling concerning potential dangers with firearms be undertaken.

Another concern is the dangerous precedent of having government interfere with the free and open discussion between a physician and patient. We feel strongly that patients and their physicians have a right to have confidential conversations about all aspects of a patient's health including safety prevention. If this becomes law what is next? Will the government step in and prevent discussions about nutrition and healthy life styles and risky behaviors?

Other states have introduced similar bills, but all with the exception of Florida have been defeated. In Florida, a federal judge has imposed a permanent injunction on the law and the success of an appeal is questionable.

The KAAP has no position on the remainder of HB2199, but we urge the committee to strike out Section 9. We feel strongly that provisions set forth in Section 9 would have a negative impact on the safety of our children in Kansas. Thank you.

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