



TESTIMONY SENATE BILL 77

Committee of the Judiciary

February 11, 2013

Thank you, Chairman King and members of the committee.

My name is Dennis Cooley and I am Past President and the current Legislative Coordinator of the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP). The Kansas Chapter represents over 90% of the pediatricians in the state and has pledged its efforts and expertise to a fundamental goal – that all children and youth have the opportunity to grow up safe and strong. In addition to my roles for the Kansas Chapter I am also the Chair of the Kansas Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality and I have been pediatrician in private practice in Topeka for more than 30 years. I am here today to provide information about the need for a change to the State Child Death Review Board statute and to express the KAAP's support for Senate Bill 77.

The State Child Death Review Board is an invaluable resource to Kansas. Any child death is a tragedy, and the board does an excellent job of collecting and analyzing factors that contributed to the child's death. This is difficult and sensitive work, and members of the board should be applauded for their commitment.

The data the board collects is available to the public only via the board's annual report. Should a researcher or other health professional wish to access the data for further analysis, they are often denied because of the statute that disallows the sharing of records. It's unfortunate because the report offers only a glimpse into the information the board has gathered. A more comprehensive examination of the data could lead to discoveries of trends and the development of policies that could help to prevent child deaths.

Senate Bill 77 would amend this statute to allow researchers to access the data for comprehensive review. I understand that confidentiality is a concern. However, all the data would be de-identified to protect families while still allowing researchers to deeply examine the elements that contributed to a child's death.

As a physician, my life's work is dedicated to preserving the health and well-being of children. I believe that we should take any measure possible to stop a child's death before it happens. This is a small and simple step that has the potential for enormous impact. The Kansas Chapter requests your support of Senate Bill 77 and welcome any questions you may have.