

Kari M. Bruffett, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

To: Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Lea Taylor, Assistant Secretary

Date: February 13, 2015

Subject: HB 2099, Authorizing school districts to administer certain surveys and questionnaires under the student data privacy act

Chairman Highland and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2099. This legislation will help address the unintended impact of SB 367 on our programs and ensure that the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) continues to be eligible for future funding.

Since 1995, KDADS, (formerly SRS) has provided funding for the administration of the Kansas Communities That Care Student survey (KCTC). The KCTC student survey, taken by approximately 100,000 6, 8, 10, and 12th grade students annually, asks youth about their behaviors and attitudes regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The survey also asks youth about environmental factors that can contribute to the development of many risky behaviors. The survey provides invaluable data to help target and evaluate various agency prevention programs.

The KCTC student survey is completely anonymous and students are not asked for any personally identifiable information. Student participation is voluntary and all data is kept confidential and only reported in aggregate form. The proposed language change, as suggested in this bill, is necessary to ensure adequate participation rates and the availability of valid reliable statewide data that is utilized extensively for prevention program planning and evaluation.

Since the passage of SB 367, KDADS has seen a major decrease in participation levels across the State, likely due to the provision requiring *active* written parental consent. The previous policy allowing children to *opt-out* at their parents request was easier for school districts to manage and therefore, led to higher participation rates. These higher participation rates ensured that the results provided for truly accurate data. This decrease in participation puts both potential funding and program accountability at risk as it does not allow for the necessary analysis and reporting of statewide data that is needed to make programmatic decisions and evaluate efforts.

Regarding funding, KDADS annually receives approximately \$2.8 million dollars of funding for prevention efforts from the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SAPTG). This collected data is used to adequately evaluate our efforts and complete the required reporting to ensure the continuation of this critical source of prevention funding. It is estimated that over the last five years, data obtained from the annual survey has helped our agency secure approximately \$18 million dollars of funding. This funding is invested at the state and community level to implement and evaluate evidence-based prevention programs, practices, and policies that have significantly contributed to the reduction of youth drug use.

Finally, data from this survey is also utilized extensively by other state agencies, local school districts, local community coalitions and health departments to pursue additional state, federal, and private grant funding. It is a critical data source and the loss of its reliability will create waves throughout the entire prevention community.

Again, I thank the Committee for this willingness to engage on this subject and at this time, I stand for questions.

