

Testimony HB 2079

Chairman Hawkins and Committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to present information related to HB 2079. I am Dr. John Bardo, President of Wichita State University and I am here to talk about the state of oral health in Kansas.

II State of Oral Health in Kansas

Oral health became a topic of conversation in 2000 with the *Oral Health in America: Report of the Surgeon General*. Since then numerous studies have documented the status of oral health and workforces related issues both in Kansas and nationally. A 2005 Kansas Health Institute Brief raised concerns about an existing shortage of dentists that is projected to grow with retirements. In 2009 the Bureau of Oral Health published the Oral Health Workforce Assessment which profiled two groups; extended care permit dental hygienists and dentists. The report discussed the concern by dentists regarding the access to dental services for Kansans. At that time the average age of dentists in Kansas was 50 and over half of the dentists were 61 years or older. A 2013 Report from the Bureau of Oral Health documents the progress and shortcomings in to oral health in Kansas. Kansas is meeting targets for oral health in increasing dental services at Federally Qualified Health Center's (FQHC's), placement of sealants in children and proportion of local health departments with oral health prevention programs. Kansas is not meeting its targets in reducing childhood cavities, untreated childhood cavities, tooth extractions and total loss of teeth in adults, and fluoridated water.

III Dental Health Professionals Shortage Areas (DHPSA's)

Workforces issues continue to raise concern in the state. The 2014 Kansas Department of Health and Environment Data show that 25 whole counties are designated as shortage areas and another 65 counties have a population designation of HPSA. In 2011 the University of Kansas, Center for Community Health Improvement studied the distribution and number of dentists in rural Kansas. They developed the term "dental desert" which means a citizen lives a 30 minute drive from a dental provider. Their findings were that 57,000 Kansans lived in these dental deserts. They project that the numbers will only increase due to retirements in the workforce.

IV Emergency Room Visits

Another concern is the number of patients seen for dental problems in the emergency rooms. In a report by the Pew Center for the States, Kansas reported at least 17,500 visits to emergency rooms for dental problems in 2010. Most of these visits involved low-income or uninsured patients.

VI Oral Systemic Health Links

Evidence continues to grow to document the importance oral health to systemic health. Conditions such as heart disease, respiratory disease and poor glucose management have been linked to poor oral health. Maintaining good oral health can be key to physical health.

VII WSU Position –

WSU has a long standing commitment to educate future health care providers for the citizens of Kansas. We have the School of Oral which houses the only baccalaureate level dental hygiene and

advanced education in general dentistry programs in the state and as such are uniquely positioned to offer the educational program for this new provider should you in your wisdom pass this legislation. Members of the university faculty created a program based on the legislation in 2011 and it was positively reviewed by a national panel of dentists.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak to today on this bill.

Sources for information:

Mapping the Rural Kansas Dental Workforce. (2011). Kimminau and Wellever: University of Kansas Medical Center. Center for Community Health Improvement.

Kansas 2009 Oral Health Workforce Assessment. (2009). Bureau of Oral Health. Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Dental Health Professions Shortage Areas. (2014). Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Bureau of Community Health Systems.

A Costly Dental Destination. (2012). Pew Center on the States.

The Declining supply of dental services in Kansas: Implications for access and options for reform. (2005). Allison. Kansas Health Institute Brief Number 18.

2013 Burden of Oral Disease in Kansas: An Assessment of the Oral Health Status of the State of Kansas. Kansas Department of Health and Environment.