



To: Sen. Mary Pilcher-Cook, Chair and Members,
Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Rachel Monger, Director of Government Affairs

Date: January 29, 2015

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 69

Thank you, Chairman Pilcher-Cook and Members of the Committee. I am Rachel Monger, Director of Government Affairs for LeadingAge Kansas, the state association for not-for-profit aging services. We have 160 members across Kansas, which include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living, homes plus, housing, low-income housing, home health agencies, home and community based service programs, PACE and Meals on Wheels. Our members serve more than 25,000 elders each day.

LeadingAge Kansas supports Senate Bill 69, and its expansion of the scope of practice and prescribing authority for advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). We believe that SB 69 would allow greater access to specialist care for nursing home residents in Kansas.

As required by state and federal law, all nursing home residents are admitted under a doctor's care. Most primary care physicians do not follow their patients to a nursing home, and the demand for those who do increases every year. With the growing number and needs of frail elders, and the relatively small number of doctors available to them, a safe and high quality long term care system would be impossible today without physician extenders like APRNs. Nursing home physicians and medical directors employ APRNs to provide the supervision, monitoring and care the physicians themselves would not otherwise be able to provide.

Maintaining access to primary care doctors continues to be a challenge, but locating specialist care is even harder. This is especially true of behavior health specialists required to meet a rising resident need for psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. This need exists all over the state, but as is true in every other part of the health care system, the lack of services is most keenly felt in rural communities.

Our members work closely with APRNs, and experience the benefit of their skills, knowledge and caring every day. LeadingAge Kansas supports SB 69 in order to increase the availability, flexibility and access to skilled specialist care for nursing home residents in Kansas.

We thank the committee for its time and consideration of this issue. We hope you will support the passage of Senate Bill 69.