

State of Kansas
House of Representatives

HOME ADDRESS: 2611 N. BAYSIDE CT.
WICHITA, KANSAS 67205
PHONE: (316) 621-9800
WEBSITE: www.brendalandwehr.com
OFFICE: RM. 352-S, STATEHOUSE
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
PHONE: (785) 296-7488



TOPEKA

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BRENDA K. LANDWEHR
Representative, 105th District

Testimony Regarding HB 2759

Rep. Brenda K. Landwehr

Thank you Chairman Waymaster and committee members for this opportunity to speak in favor of HB2759 which will add veterinarians as mandatory reporters in the Kansas K-TRAC system which is our tracking system for controlled substances such as Opioids.

Kansas was ahead of the curve with this system many years ago. It started as a way to track purchases and prescriptions of medicines used to make meth.

During a retreat last fall in Wichita I listened to individuals, including law enforcement, talk about the increase of opioid addiction in Kansas. Because of our K-TRAC system it is not yet a crisis as it is in some other states. Could it be? Absolutely So, the question became what is happening, and what do we do in Kansas to address this?

The one thing I did know was we needed to be careful not to tighten things down so badly that people dealing with chronic pain would not have access to the medications they need to deal with the pain they live with every day. I have family members who live with chronic pain and because of opioids they are able to reduce their pain to a level which allows them to live their lives as people without pain do and to go to work every week.

During my research I discovered that realtors holding open houses will have their clients remove medicines from their home because people will attend an open house for the sole purpose of searching for opioids. Some people will visit

patients on hospice care to acquire opioids from the patient's supply. Parents need to be more aware of who their children are bringing into their homes because individuals will make friends with someone just to have access to more medications.

I was shocked and surprised when I heard about the increase of opioids being prescribed and dispensed by veterinarians. Among the research I discovered that individuals would actually steal an animal and then hurt the animal so they can take it to a veterinarian for the sole purpose of obtaining opioids because they know there is no reporting of the opioid and it will be dispensed to them on sight.

During conversations with our state medical director, Dr. Greg Lakin and our pharmacy board, as well as Rep. John Eplee, it became apparent there is a need for us to upgrade our tracking system and include veterinarians.

The Social Services Budget Committee heard testimony as well on the need to improve what we have and to add the veterinarians. There are 19 states currently that have the veterinarians in their tracking system and Nebraska is just now adding them. They are also required to report in Oklahoma. A lot has changed since K-TRACS was created and the veterinarians were excluded for several reasons.

Today the system is much more uniform on hardware and software and is easier to use. I know that cost was also a concern of veterinarians at the time K-TRACS was put in place. This does not appear to be an obstacle today. The alternative to not adding the veterinarians to the tracking system is for them to call law enforcement when someone brings an animal in that they will be prescribing opioids for so that we can be certain the animal is not stolen and has not been beaten for the purpose of obtaining opioids. However, this increases the burden on law enforcement.

I ask that you give consideration to supporting HB 2579 to keep Kansas on the leading edge of controlling opioid abuse.

Thank you for your time and I will be happy to stand for questions.