



**PROPONENT Testimony on SB 100
For the House Education Committee
March 14, 2017
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President, Kansas Independent College Association**

Chairman Aurand and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony related to SB 100.

KICA represents the nineteen independent colleges of Kansas, all of whom are not-for-profit institutions of higher education, all of whom offer undergraduate degrees, and all of whom are regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

The institutions of the KICA are heavily involved in nurse education and have been for decades. Last year, 45 percent of all the college degrees awarded in Kansas for nursing came from the KICA colleges. Twelve of our nineteen member colleges offer nursing programs, and in 2015-2016 we awarded 628 undergraduate (bachelor's or associate's) degrees in nursing. The field has a deep and clear fit with our mission and emphasis on personal attention and service.

Our students are eligible for the existing Kansas Nursing Service Scholarship. The financial aid provided to students who are committed to a nursing career in Kansas is most helpful. However, our institutions are relatively minor players in the grand scheme of the scholarship. In 2015-2016, students at only four KICA institutions received a Nursing Service Scholarship: Baker University (Baldwin City, KS with nursing program at Stormont Vail in Topeka), Benedictine College (Atchison, KS), Bethel College (North Newton, KS) and Hesston College (Hesston, KS). In total, KICA students received \$16,250 last year (2015-16).

KICA supports SB 100's expansion of the allowable service locations to include mental health facilities. The need for mental health professionals, especially support staff like nurses, is acute across the state. While there is some question to the status of the Affordable Care Act moving forward, recent congressional testimony demonstrates that federal legislators are leery to reinstate any ban on actions that would discriminate against people based on pre-existing mental health issues. This and the Clay Hunt SAV Act, providing gaps in service for veterans with post-traumatic and other mental illness supports a perspective that the need for mental health workers, and support staff

(i.e. nurses) is critical. State provided support to ensure qualified entrants to this field in the manner of SB 100 will only solidify the state of Kansas as a leading proponent of educational resourcing.

KICA strongly supports the passage of SB 100. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you on this issue. I am happy to answer any questions you may have or provide additional data as you request.