

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL

Tammy Peterman, RN, MS
Executive Vice President
Chief Operating Officer
Chief Nursing Officer

Proponent Testimony **Tammy Peterman, MS, RN, FAAN** **H.B. 2150** **February 2, 2017**

Chairman Barker and members of the committee:

I'm Tammy Peterman, executive vice president, chief operating officer and chief nursing officer of The University of Kansas Health System. I grew up in western Kansas in Rooks County. My dad was a primary care physician for nearly 40 years in Stockton.

I have the privilege of working with a great team of staff at our hospital. We have over 10,000 employees—over 2,500 registered nurses. I am in awe of the care that is provided to the hundreds of thousands of patients—both inpatient and outpatient- who come to our health system for care. We take care of patients from every county in Kansas, approximately 90% of the counties in Missouri and each of the 50 states. About 30% of our patients come from outside the Kansas City area. We have become a destination for the delivery of health care in our region.

We provide care to some of the sickest patients in the country. As the only American College of Surgeons Level I designated trauma center in the area, we receive some of the most critically ill patients who have sustained traumatic injuries. As an NCI designated Cancer Center, we take care of patients who have been diagnosed with some of the most devastating cancers. As the only American College of Surgeons designated Burn Center in the area, we care for patients with significant burns from across the state and region. Those patients entrust us with their care and believe we have a safe and secure environment. Our staff deal with life and death situations each and every day.

I interact with our staff on a daily basis. They are caring, competent, and compassionate. Because of their outstanding efforts, we have been recognized locally, regionally and nationally for the quality care we provide every day. We are able to recruit and retain the very best staff

because of the environment in which they work. We are one of approximately only 450 hospitals worldwide to achieve Magnet designation for nursing excellence. Our employee turnover is significantly lower than national averages and our staff engagement is outstanding.

Our organization's vision is to "lead the nation in caring, healing, teaching and discovering." My concern as a senior executive in our health system is that we may not be in a position to continue our journey to excellence if guns are allowed to be brought into our organization. I'm concerned we will not be able to recruit new staff. We will lose some of our current staff. They are already so very concerned about the possibility of guns coming into our hospital.

A big, busy, complex, complicated academic medical center already has a fairly high degree of stress. Patients and families are dealing with some of the most difficult times of their lives. Can you imagine the day when a patient has been diagnosed with a devastating disease and they have access to a gun in their room? Or the spouse of a patient who has abused his partner enters the hospital and is carrying a gun? Or the victim of a gang related shooting is visited by a rival gang member who is carrying a gun? These are some of the concerns of our staff as well as our patients.

Some of our patients lack reasoning ability, some lack mental capacity, some lack judgement especially in stressful situations. Some want a quick end to a dreadful situation. Our staff deal with this every day. Sometimes our staff are injured by patients or family members while under our care. Typically the injuries are from staff being hit, kicked or bitten by patients. Why would anyone want to add the potential for gun violence to this type of situation?

No one comes to a hospital assuming they will be the victim of a violent act while they are being cared for. And, no one comes to work in our hospital and expects they will be injured or threatened by anyone with a gun.

Our staff have dedicated their lives to saving and supporting the lives of others. The introduction of guns into our hospital puts the lives of those serving others at an unnecessary risk.

We respectfully request you join me and our staff in support of the passage of HB 2150.

