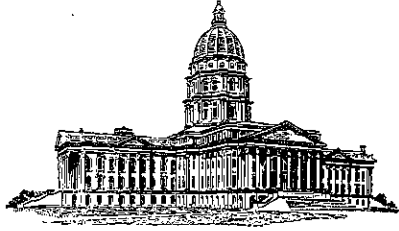


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PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR HB 2121--2/2/17

Mr. Chairman and fellow committee members. It has been quite interesting to sit on the other side of committee table and hear all the testimony on all the bills we have heard to date---some much easier than others. I am hopeful that this is on the easier side as amended now. I have offered proponent testimony on several occasions in years past when working on various bills for KMS and the KAFP. But I appreciate this opportunity to briefly discuss with my HHS committee the importance and the merits of HB 2121.

As many of you know I continue to enjoy a fulfilling career as a Family Physician in Atchison for 35 plus years, practicing the full breadth and depth of Family Medicine. In my prime I delivered over 1600 babies and took care of them and many more over the years. I learned first-hand that immunizations are the single biggest scientific medical intervention to improve population health and save lives in my career and honestly in the history of medicine. Immunizations are the bedrock of preventative health care in Kansas and the US. And now we have a robust tool to register and monitor all vaccinations given in our state (minus influenza) which can afford us even more advantages for preventative health in this state.

That tool is WEB-IZ. Honestly this digital tool was conceived in 1992 by the Governor's Task Force on Immunizations. The concept grew out of this think tank of physicians, KDHE officials, public health leaders, and public health nurses as one of many ways to improve pediatric immunization rates which were abysmal at that time. And after 12 years of planning, designing and tweaking different softwares, WEB-IZ was unveiled for providers in 2005.

So what is it and why the big deal? It is an immunization information registry website that is a statewide network tool that all immunization providers can participate in. This site is designed to receive all information entered into it by physician offices, public health clinics, and pharmacists as they register what vaccines were administered and on what date. Obviously by having a central registry of all vaccines this prevents duplication and unnecessary administration of the same vaccines, giving them too soon, or missing opportunities for patients when they are right there in your office. It is a fantastic digital methodology to help all Kansas patients get the right vaccines on time promoting safety and optimal preventative health care. And an added public health benefit is disease trending and geographic mapping of which counties need more help administering and keeping their rates caught up.

All states have immunization registries similar to ours. Like ours they are digitally secure in the information they store and are only accessible to those providers that administer vaccines. As a practicing physician I couldn't practice without the information that WEB-IZ affords me many times

every day. The system has evolved now to the place that we depend on the software to inform us as to what vaccinations are due for each patient on each visit. And as there are more vaccines than ever before for older adults--Zostavax, Prevnar-13, Pneumovac, Tdap, Hep-B, etc., this digital information potentially saves lives every day in our state. And please understand that parents/guardians can opt out of this registry if they want to. But we enjoy a very low opt out rate for the reasons outlined above. Parents get it.

All providers of vaccinations in Kansas should participate in data entry of all immunizations administered at each visit, through WEB-IZ. Pharmacists are required to do this. Even in the recent bill that passed out of committee that language was written in the bill and the pharmacists are happy to comply. All public health clinics comply and report to WEB-IZ. The only providers that don't are physicians--family docs, pediatricians, and internists. The last report that I can find reliable data on was 2013 and we were at a 57% participation rate of physicians at that time. I hope a conferee after me will tell you that it is a higher rate now. I just could not get current information on this.

So why don't more physicians participate? Because of the advent of EMR (electronic medical records) and the super complexity of the immunization schedule for peds and adolescent patients and even adults now. Documenting immunizations may require, in many provider's cases, double data entry because not all EMRs interface well with WEB-IZ. This is a big digital hassle and some docs just don't want to do it or feel that cannot afford to pay someone like a nurse or a clerk to do double data entry--especially high volume offices that may give hundreds of vaccines in a single day as in a pediatrics clinic with several health care providers. But the connectivity as I think you will hear is better than ever before with WEB-IZ. The time is right for this measure to go forward.

And after careful consideration for my fellow physicians, we did put in an amendment to give physicians that give vaccines in their office but are not participants nearly 3 years to figure this out and get signed up with WEB-IZ. There is some grant money available from KDHE to facilitate this digital transition, as I believe you will hear. Kansas is certainly not the first state to require participation in WEB-IZ for all immunization providers. 16 other states have similar requirements.

So I submit to you Mr. Chairman and fellow committee members of HHS, that the time for this is now. It is never going to get any better. Welcome to Health Care of our digital world! We have given physicians 3 years to get on board. I would greatly appreciate your full support of HB 2121.