

Testimony on HB 2195
House Health and Human Services Committee
February 13, 2017

My name is Monty Cruse, my wife and I own the Miracle-Ear hearing aid franchise for Wichita and SE Kansas. We have combined 28 years in the profession. Your committee will soon hear a presentation on HB2195.

This bill is an attempt to consolidate the two agencies responsible for providing licenses to those who currently, and in the future, can dispense hearing aids in the state of Kansas. KDADS makes a compelling argument to move KBHAE under their control but fails to reveal the underlying reason for their effort. KDADS wants to eventually change the requirements to dispense hearing aids in Kansas to require a doctorate degree which is not the current requirement.

Most practices that currently dispense hearing aids in Kansas are small, family owned businesses that have been passed down through generations operating without advanced degrees. Changing the requirement will eventually require the hiring of people outside of the family to continue or go out of business all together.

The notion that holders of advanced degrees are the only people that should be able to practice hearing health dispensing was recently dispelled by Congress. The Veterans Administration long held the position that only those with advanced degrees could administer hearing tests and dispense and program hearing aids for veterans. Our own Senator Jerry Moran introduced a bill to allow those of us licensed without those degrees to provide those services. The bill passed both chambers unanimously and was signed into law by then President Barak Obama on December 14, 2016.

Given that all the other reasons for consolidation are just a smoke screen, I urge you to vote NO for HB 2195 and protect small family businesses in Kansas.