



February 10, 2017

Health and Human Services Committee
Kansas House of Representatives
Capitol Building
300 SW 10th Avenue, Room 370W
Topeka, KS 66612-1504

Re: Kansas HB 2254 and the use of telemedicine

Dear Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of United Spinal Association which supports public policies to promote and improve quality of life for individuals with spinal cord injuries and disorders. Accordingly, United Spinal is submitting public comment supporting Kansas' House Bill 2254. Specifically, HB 2254's language clarifying the establishment of the physician-patient relationship via telemedicine and physicians' prescribing capabilities via telemedicine will allow the state of Kansas to maximize expanded access to healthcare for people with disabilities through telemedicine.

United Spinal Association is the largest disability-led national non-profit organization founded by paralyzed veterans in 1946 and has since provided service programs and advocacy to improve the quality of life of those across the life span living with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) such as multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), post-polio syndrome and spina bifida. United Spinal represents over one million individuals with spinal cord injuries and disorders, over 50 chapters, over 100 rehabilitation hospital members and close to 200 support groups nationwide. Throughout its history, United Spinal Association has devoted its energies, talents and programs to improving the quality of life for these Americans and for advancing their independence. United Spinal Association is also a VA-recognized veterans service organization (VSO) serving veterans with disabilities of all kinds.

Telemedicine is a valuable tool for meeting the needs of Kansans, particularly those with disabilities, and United Spinal Association strongly supports HB 2254 for the purpose of improving public access to high-quality health care. Telemedicine is not intended to replace the individual's relationship with a primary care physician, but it is an appropriate method for providing treatment for many common, non-emergency ailments. For people in rural areas and those living with spinal cord injuries or other physical disabilities, obtaining in-person care can be a difficult process. Advances in technology give patients and their caregivers the ability to use common communications devices to connect with licensed doctors in a manner that is affordable and convenient.

While it is important that telemedicine providers be regulated to protect the public, it is equally important that policies not be designed to impede access. Being able to receive a prescription via telemedicine is an important and practical part of telemedicine's ability to expand healthcare access, which is why we hope you will vote "yes" on HB 2254. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jasey Cárdenas at jcardenas@unitedspinal.org or (202) 556-2076, x7104.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Bennewith".

Alexandra Bennewith, MPA
Vice President, Government Relations
United Spinal Association