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Timothy Keck, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

HB 2195 would transfer the duties and functions of the Kansas Board of Examiners in Fitting and Dispensing of Hearing Instruments (KBHAE) to KDADS. The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), Health Occupations Credentialing department is responsible for the administration of licensing, certification or credentialing of eight different professions and occupations. Health Occupations Credentialing already has long-standing relationships with two boards – the Board of Adult Care Home Administrators and the Kansas Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board. The Kansas Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board is advisory to KDADS.

While the transfer makes sense from a practical standpoint, the committee should not assume that the transfer would result in initial substantial savings. There would be initial costs related to the transference of licensee data from the current database location as well as adding another profession and associated licensure process to our database and license renewal website. Online license renewal is available to the professions licensed and registered by KDADS along with a searchable website that allows the public to look up licensure status information.

We would recommend the following changes;

- The Board is currently fee funded with 10 percent of the monies received going to the State General Fund. We would recommend that that language be restored to the current bill to allow KDADS to receive those funds to offset the costs.
- Remove the language requiring fees be reduced whenever the amount of fees collected is in excess of expenses.
- Remove the requirement that an Audiologist must also be licensed as a Hearing Instrument Specialist (HIS) in order to fit and dispense hearing aids. Removal of the HIS license for audiologists would not reduce the protection of Kansas consumers because the educational programs required for audiology include all aspects of the dispensing and fitting of hearing instruments.
- Change licensure period from a one-year period to two years to align the licensure period with all other professions licensed by KDADS.

Regulatory issues do arise where the regulations for Audiologists and Hearing Instrument Specialists overlap and require involvement of both the Kansas Board of Examiners in Fitting and Dispensing of Hearing Instruments and the Kansas Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board. Attached are some examples of those issues.

Steve Irwin

Director Health Occupations Credentialing