



INDEPENDENCE
INCLUSION
INNOVATION

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TO: Rep. Dan Hawkins and

Members, House Committee on Health and Human Services

FR: Tim Wood, Executive Director, InterHab

RE: HB 2139

Chairman Hawkins and members of the Committee—

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2139. I am Executive Director for InterHab, which represents community-based service providers and community developmental disability organizations (CDDOs) across the State, and has been collaboratively engaged with the State for every program reform and program redesign for more than 40 years.

Kansans with developmental disabilities face numerous challenges on the road to independence. One of these challenges is finding consistent dental care. Far too many in the I/DD community go without regular check-ups or necessary dental work—an unfortunate reality, given the documented link between dental health and overall physical health.

The solution isn't as simple as finding openings in a dentist's schedule. Kansans with developmental disabilities may have transportation issues that effectively prevent them from receiving suitable dental care. This is particularly true for the I/DD community in western Kansas, where dental coverage is already sparse and difficult to arrange.

Dental therapy alleviates this challenge. It would allow dental therapists to travel where the I/DD community receives other supports and services. It would also make it possible for Kansans with significant developmental disabilities to receive suitable dental care in their homes.

Additionally, the potential positive financial aspects of dental therapy cannot be understated. For the I/DD community, regular dental care can be prohibitively expensive. Reducing the cost will grant a fair number of Kansans with developmental disabilities the financial ability to receive suitable dental care.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on HB 2139.