

Testimony House Bill 2206
House Health and Human Services Committee
Hearing: Thursday, February 16, 2017 – 1:30 pm Room 546-S

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Chairperson Hawkins and Members of the Committee:

Hospice Services and Palliative Care of Northwest Kansas supports the passage of House Bill 2206 and reimbursement parity for telehealth. People and communities in northwest Kansas would benefit by improving access to quality care. I want to share stories of our use of telehealth (telehospice) across sixteen (16) counties in northwest Kansas. Hospice Services is partnering with the University of Kansas Medical Center and the Midwest Cancer Alliance in “telehospice” to improve quality.

- Hospice nurse is with patient in Osborne County and Hospice APRN (wound-care certified) in Thomas County (more than 130 miles one direction) uses telehealth (HIPAA compliant) to observe and evaluation the wound to make recommendations for wound care. Hospice APRN stated “I couldn’t believe the clarity and how much I was able to assess and evaluate.”
- Hospice patient in Sherman County declines rapidly and hospice nurses, with patient and family permission, invite family to use telehealth to visit with father. Family resides on east coast – and couldn’t believe their ability (HIPAA compliant) to converse and interact with their father.
- Hospice utilizes telehealth to involve adult children from several states to discuss hospice information and possible admission to hospice of parents in Cheyenne County.
- Hospice nurse in Gove County uses telehealth to contact Hospice Medical Director in Smith County to discuss goals of care and questions about diagnoses and prognosis.

We believe the possibilities of telehealth are infinite and so appreciate the opportunity to partner with KUMC and Midwest Cancer Alliance to explore improving access to quality care.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this with you. And thank you for your work and consideration of this important issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandy Kuhlman, Executive Director
Hospice Services and Palliative Care of Northwest Kansas