



Testimony for Senate Bill 165
Emergency Opioid Antagonists
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

By Jody Reel, PharmD
Kansas Pharmacists Association, Topeka Kansas
February 20th, 2017

Chairman Schmidt and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Jody Reel, and I am a Kansas pharmacy owner and Chair of Government Affairs /Board Director for the Kansas Pharmacists Association. The Kansas Pharmacists Association is the statewide professional association in Kansas that represents Kansas pharmacists from all practice settings. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 165—Providing insurance coverage for the opioid-related treatments and establishing standards for use of emergency opioid antagonists. Passage of this bill would increase access to the lifesaving drug naloxone.

The Centers for Disease Control has declared that the United States having an opioid overdose epidemic. Nearly half of all opioid overdose deaths involve a prescription opioid, including common the medications morphine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, and fentanyl. In 2015, 329 people died from an opioid overdose in the State of Kansas, and the number of deaths is increasing every year. Stronger opioids are available for abuse, which pose a risk to those coming in contact with them accidentally.

Balloon amendments provided at the hearing will align some of the definitions and groups affected by passage of Senate Bill 165 with the version passed out of the House Health and Human Services Committee. The language regarding increasing access to opioid antagonists was created by the Kansas Drug Coalition, representing law enforcement, emergency medical services, pharmacy, medicine, and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. These aspects of the bill will ensure proper and safe access to a life-saving drug.

Lack of access to naloxone is particularly prevalent in rural Kansas. In an overdose situation, patients may have to wait until they are taken to an emergency department before they receive naloxone. With this bill, caregivers, law enforcement, volunteer first responders and EMS could have the medication for administration. By reviving patients sooner, they have fewer complications and better outcomes, which could result in a decrease in health care costs.

Thank you for your consideration on Senate Bill 165—Providing insurance coverage for the opioid-related treatments and establishing standards for use of emergency opioid antagonists.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody K. Reel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jody K. Reel, PharmD
Chair, Government Affairs
District 2 Board Director
Kansas Pharmacists Association