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**Testimony to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
In Support of SB165 – Emergency Opioid Antidotes
February 20, 2017**

Chairman Schmidt and Committee Members,

Our associations strongly support SB165. The bill proposes a procedure for allowing first responders to have access to these drugs which counter opioid overdoses. We will let others with medical expertise explain the medical applications and safety of these drugs. Many states already allow first responders to have access to these drugs and administer them to those experiencing opioid overdoses. There are numerous stories of lives saved because of those actions.

Kansas has not yet experienced the horrific levels of opioid overdoses that have been seen in other states. In Louisville, KY, emergency services answered 695 heroin overdose calls in January this year -- an average of 22 a day. In Cuyahoga County, Ohio, there were 70 deaths through February 6 of this year. In August of 2016, there were 174 reported heroin overdoses over a six-day period in Cincinnati.

To be clear, we have seen opioid overdoses and deaths in Kansas, just not in the numbers other states have seen. But it is increasing and this bill prepares us to be able to respond. A June 3, 2016, KSNT (Topeka) news reported on deaths already occurring in Kansas from a synthetic opioid known as U-47700. Over a one-week period over this past Christmas, Shawnee County experienced at least 9 heroin overdose deaths. Prescription opioid abuses also lead to overdoses.

The use of these antidotes will not come without significant costs. Local agencies will have to weigh their local exposure to these cases with the associated costs and their funding sources as they decide whether to implement these programs. But this bill is necessary to make the programs legally possible and to provide an opportunity to prepare our first responders to save lives.

We strongly encourage you to amend this bill to encompass things included in HB2217 and to move this bill favorably.

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