

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

March 6, 2018

HB – 2573 - Proponent

Dr. Valerie French

I'm Dr. Valerie French am a board certified obstetrician gynecologist and have cared for pregnant women for the past 9 years. I see around 75 patients a week in Wyandotte County and find joy in ensuring that they have the healthiest pregnancies possible. But pregnancy can bring complications and on rare occasion, women can die during or shortly after a pregnancy. In fact, the United States is the only developed country where maternal mortality is on the rise. We saw a 26% increase in the US maternal mortality rate between 2000 and 2014.¹ Yet , we don't yet have a system to review why these deaths occur. The maternal mortality review committee proposed in this bill would bring together local ob-gyns, nurses, social workers, and other health care professionals to review individual maternal deaths and recommend solutions to prevent them in the future.

When I'm not caring for patients, I'm also a clinician researcher with a master's degree in biostatistics and epidemiology. I understand the value of quality data and how we can use it to improve our communities. Vital statistics-based surveillance systems are useful for monitoring trends, but it is the state maternal mortality review committees that are best positioned to both evaluate maternal mortality and identify opportunities for prevention. We have learned from these committees in other states that that roughly half of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States are preventable.²⁻⁴ Here are a few examples of data-driven actions from maternal mortality review committees: 1) in Florida, urgent bulletins to providers were developed on the dangers of placental disorders and heart conditions specific to pregnancy, 2) committee members in Michigan and West Virginia took steps to increase knowledge of maternal deaths related to substance use and suicide, and 3) in Ohio, hospitals developed simulations to practice emergencies like hemorrhage at the time of delivery.

I'm proud that we already rigorously review the fetal and infant deaths in Kansas. I will be joining the fetal and infant mortality review committee this spring. Maternal deaths warrant the same careful scrutiny, so that we can ensure our expecting mothers receive quality, evidence-based care.

1. MacDorman, M., Declercq, E., Cabral, H., Morton, C., "Is the United States Maternal Mortality Rate Increasing? Disentangling trends from measurement issues: Short title: U.S. Maternal Mortality Trends." *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. September, 2016.
2. Berg CJ, Harper MA, Atkinson SM, et al. Preventability of pregnancy-related deaths: Results of a state-wide review. *Obstet Gynecol* 2005;106:1228–1234.
3. Geller SE, Cox SM, Kilpatrick SJ. A descriptive model of preventability in maternal morbidity and mortality. *J Perinatol* 2006;26:79–84.
4. Nannini A, Weiss J, Goldstein R, Fogerty S. Pregnancy associated mortality at the end of the twentieth century: Massachusetts, 1990–1999. *J Am Med Womens Assoc* (1972) 2002;57:140–143.