



TESTIMONY OF KRISTEN POWELL
BEFORE THE HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 2082

Mr. Chairman, members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Kristen Powell and I am a pharmacist and site manager for Genoa Healthcare. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for House Bill 2082, which allows pharmacists to give medications that require a provider to administer. We support this because it increases access to life-saving medications.

Genoa Healthcare operates 12 pharmacies in Kansas, all of which are co-located inside community mental health centers. My pharmacy is in Family Service and Guidance Center in Topeka and my patients are children. We understand the unique and special needs of the severe and persistent mentally ill population. Our pharmacies offer full service, confidential services to clients, and are extremely convenient for filling prescriptions. We have very low rates of unclaimed prescriptions, resulting in a 96 percent adherence rate and lower overall healthcare costs.

Over ninety percent of our patients are on some kind of public assistance, Medicare, Medicaid or are dual eligible. Furthermore, medication adherence is especially important within the mental health population. Studies have shown that a one-day gap in therapy increases the chance of hospitalization by 50 percent. Genoa Healthcare pharmacists work very hard to ensure our patients receive the best possible care and are adherent to their medications.

This bill will help our consumers stay on their medications by making it more convenient for them to receive them. Allowing pharmacists to give shots and administer nasal medications increases accessibility to the medications. Furthermore, many of our patients rely on public transportation. If a nurse or physician is not available to administer this treatment, our consumers will leave the facility, making it highly unlikely that they will be able to return for their medication. This will cause lower adherence rates and add preventable costs to the healthcare system in Kansas.

Each day, as a pharmacist for Genoa Healthcare, I am in a unique position to help patients, specifically children, with their mental illness. Each patient and situation is unique and must be handled that way for the treatment to be successful.

One area where this bill will have a major impact is with long-acting injectables. These specific medications are given prior to the patient leaving the facility. They release the medication slowly, over a long period of time. This increases the chance of successful treatment by reducing dependence on a patient remembering to take the medication on their own as they would with oral medications.



For example, one of my patients is on Methotrexate, an injectable medication used to treat juvenile arthritis. I received a panicked call from his mother who could not get her child in to see his doctor to get an injection. She asked me what to do. I told her to come into the pharmacy and I would walk her through giving the injection to her son herself. This is a perfect example of why this bill is so important. With this bill, I could have administered the injection for her.

I ask today that you help important treatments such as this be available and accessible to our patients. I ask that prior to your vote you consider the patient living with mental illness or a substance use disorder, the strength it took to seek help, and their need to receive timely, accessible, and therapeutic treatment.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, once again thank you for allowing me to testify. Genoa Healthcare respectfully asks that you vote yes on House Bill 2082. Thank you and I will be happy to answer any questions.