

Oral Testimony before the
Committee on Health and Human Services
Melinda Lavon, Board of Directors, Advocate
Kansas Midwives Alliance
February 11th 2018 1:30pm Room 546-S

Support for HOUSE BILL 2066

Thank you Chair Landwehr and HHS committee members for today's hearing.

My name is Melinda Lavon and I am currently serving on the board for the Kansas Midwives Alliance (KMA). The KMA is an organization that includes and supports Kansas Midwives, including Certified Nurse Midwives, who are also trained and licensed as Advanced Practice Registered Nurses.

House Bill 2066 is significant for multiple reasons. 1) The bill will put Kansas on par with the other states that have already modernized their APRN statues. 2) The bill does NOT narrow the scope of the APRN, but does allow for APRNs to continue serving Kansas families according to scope of services we have come to expect from them. This helps prevent confusion among healthcare consumers.

3) The bill DOES remove the need for a physician to be responsible for the work that nurse practitioners are performing. Physicians are understandably hesitant to sign as a "collaborative" or "responsible physician"; some doctors have even required payments from the APRN in exchange for signing the documents. These payments may be 6-10% of revenues, which may not be commensurate with APRN salary and insurance reimbursement rates. However, many physicians simply decline collaborative practice agreements with APRNs all together. With this practice environment, the state of Kansas has lost several CNM-APRN healthcare providers in recent years to other states due to the difficulty of procuring a collaborative physician agreement. Kansas cannot afford to train and export our much needed APRNs.

Removing this barrier to practice will allow nurse practitioners to do things like complete their education and then practice in small communities currently without adequate physician coverage. APRNs may also be able to help alleviate other healthcare crises we are experiencing in Kansas, specifically our hospitals that are suffering financially.

Personally speaking, our family sees Beth, an APRN at Lawrence Family Medicine and Obstetrics and we are grateful for getting our daughter's strep throat thwarted with the appropriate antibiotics before Scarlet Fever set in and before her Lupus symptoms become aggravated, which can be dangerous and lead to rapid organ failure. There are physician shortages throughout Kansas, and their heavy work loads can mean having to wait for an appointment in a clinically inappropriate time frame or forcing families to seek care unnecessarily in emergency departments. If more Kansans had access to APRNs like we did last September, they may be able to avoid hospital admission or prevent conditions from worsening due to current barriers in accessing care.

In closing the Kansas Midwives Alliance asks you to support modernizing APRN statues by approving this bill and sending it forward to the House for a vote.

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