



May 13, 2020

House Judiciary Committee

Testimony in Support of the Kansas Medical Society Amendment Regarding Health Care
Provider Liability Protection

Chairman Patton and members of the committee,

Thank you for your leadership during the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We support the efforts of the Kansas Medical Society to secure passage of legislation that will provide enhanced liability protections for health care professionals during the current pandemic.

The members of our association have immediate pandemic-related needs that warrant most of our energy, attention, and resources. The Behavioral Health Association of Kansas (BHAK) is comprised of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment and behavioral health providers. Our revenue losses are significant since the pandemic began. Currently, patients are less likely to make appointments; residential treatment programs are especially impacted due to current social distancing guidelines; referrals for services are dwindling; and employees providing services face all the issues of home and work safety now. The expansion of telemedicine services has helped compensate for some lost revenue while enhancing some access to services. Our patients are especially vulnerable due to poverty, stigma, and the often overwhelming and ongoing challenges of mental illness and addiction.

For all these reasons, we support the KMS proposed language to provide protection for our health care providers and treatment provider agencies. This temporary and enhanced liability protection will diminish one potential risk factor while our administration can focus on treating our citizens and protecting our staff.

Respectfully,

Stuart J. Little, Ph.D.
President, Behavioral Health Association of Kansas