



Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION

TO: Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Tara Mays, Vice President of State Government Relations

DATE: January 19, 2022

RE: HB 2477 Proponent

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide support for HB 2477 and the extension of the current Executive Orders on behalf of our 122 community hospital members.

Kansas hospitals continue to serve on the frontlines in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The flexibilities implemented under Executive Orders 22-01 and 22-02 will begin to provide Kansas hospitals with needed tools to address staffing challenges and ensure access to care for patients during a time when we are experiencing historic patient volumes.

As many of you are aware, our hospitals are feeling the effects of a myriad of challenges that are currently contributing to increased emergency room volumes and wait times, bottlenecks in our ability to transfer patients between facilities, decreased inpatient services and care that isn't emergency in nature.

Contributing to these current strains on the system is a combination of many of the following:

- routine care needs;
- delayed care;
- increased COVID-19 cases between the previously prevalent Delta variant and the fast-spreading Omicron;
- increases in other respiratory and seasonal viruses such as the flu;
- increased need for early intervention treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies with limited supplies;
- overall global supply chain issues.

In addition, like many other industries, our hospitals are facing workforce challenges. Staff in the hospital are also subject to the overall community spread and are being impacted by isolation and quarantine due to exposure for themselves and their families.

While we are hopeful that this difficult combination of challenges is short-term, the flexibilities provided in these executive orders are critical and have come at a crucial time for our hospitals.

To ensure that we have the flexibility needed to address the current patient volumes we are currently experiencing, we ask this committee to consider further extending the provisions of the executive orders beyond the 15-day statutory period. The unfortunate reality is the peak of hospitalizations may not have yet been reached. The extension of these provisions will enable Kansas hospitals to access additional resources as we continue to develop contingency plans that help us address the health care needs of our communities.

Continuing these flexibilities is vital to addressing the latest health care crisis. In addition, we believe that these reasonable regulatory flexibilities will continue to assist Kansas hospitals in their efforts to provide patient care at a critical time for our healthcare system in Kansas.

We ask that you support HB 2477. Thank you for your continued support of Kansas hospitals.