



**KANSAS**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
**COUNTIES**

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Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee  
February 9, 2021  
SB 175

Kansas Association of Counties  
Proponent Testimony – Written Only

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing the Kansas Association of Counties to offer proponent testimony on SB 175, which would enact the rural emergency hospital act, allowing for the licensure of rural emergency hospitals.

Public health is a vital function of county government. Over the last several years, rural areas have been hit hard by the closing of hospitals in some areas, leaving healthcare “deserts” in parts of the state.

SB 175 would allow rural hospitals to opt-in to a new funding model that would allow them to serve as an emergency entry point into the state’s health care system 24 hours a day while still maintaining a clinic during traditional business hours. While these rural emergency medical centers wouldn’t have overnight bed stays, they would be reimbursed at higher-than-current rates for the services they do provide, most notably for emergency care and transportation. We believe that in the short term, these hospitals would be on immediately better financial footing because they wouldn’t have the kind of facility costs that critical access hospitals currently carry, and over the long term these hospitals will plan their facility construction in an efficient manner based on their new responsibilities as rural emergency hospitals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information to the committee. KAC stands ready to answer questions at the appropriate time.

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