



Kansas
Breastfeeding
Coalition, Inc.

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January 19, 2020

Senator Richard Hilderbrand, Chair
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
Proponent, SB 42

Chair Hilderbrand and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) and the First 1,000 Days Kansas initiative, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 42 which would make important changes to the way our state reviews maternal deaths. The KBC believes SB 42 is an important step toward health equity in Kansas.

Under SB 42, the formation of an external subcommittee including stakeholders of color would increase the state's capacity to review maternal mortality cases in women of color who are dying in unacceptably disproportionate rates across the country. According to the 2020 Kansas Maternal Mortality Review Committee Report, "The proportion of deaths that occurred among non-Hispanic Black women (23.1%), Hispanic women (23.1%), non-Hispanic women of other races (15.4%) far exceeded their representation among the population of women giving birth (7.1%, 16.2%, 6.8%, respectively) in Kansas."¹

While many organizations are working collaboratively to improve maternal mortality and morbidity, the numbers reflect the need to identify and address factors contributing to higher death rates in women of color during pregnancy, childbirth and the year following. According to the CDC, "Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women."² The KBC believes SB 42 would provide the information necessary to better understand the root causes of these inequities.

Furthermore, SB 42 would call for the promotion of the continuity of maternal healthcare from pregnancy through the postpartum period and the implementation of performance measures in accordance with the maternal and child health services block grant. Aligning priorities and strengthening the ability of local health officers to generate and evaluate maternal healthcare performance indicators is a step toward achieving measurable change in the number of preventable pregnancy-related deaths.

The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition and the First 1,000 Days Kansas initiative respectfully urge the committee to support SB 42 to improve the health and wellness of Kansans.

Sincerely,

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¹ Kansas Maternal Mortality Report, 2020. https://kmmrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/KS-Maternal-Morbidity-Mortality-Report_Dec-2020_FINAL2-21.pdf

² <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>

Mission To improve the health and well-being of Kansans by working collaboratively to promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

Vision Breastfeeding is normal and supported throughout Kansas.