

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
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*Investing today for a healthy tomorrow*

March 22, 2021

Testimony of Harvey County Health Department to the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Proponent for HB 2248 – March 24, 2021

Chair Billinger and Members of the Subcommittee:

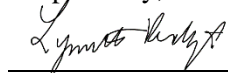
Thank you for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of House Bill 2248 regarding increasing state financial assistance to local health departments under specified circumstances. HB 2248 slightly revises K.S.A. 65-242, a law governing formula funding for local health departments, so that the minimum payment value of \$7,000 will increase to \$15,000 so long as at least \$3 million is budgeted for the formula. The purpose behind this change is to provide an inflation adjustment, as the \$7,000 minimum has been in place since around 1992, and the buying power of the dollar has diminished since then due to inflation.

While our health department currently receives over the \$7,000 minimum (68 counties, out of 105, are assigned just the minimum amount)<sup>1</sup> we view this update as critical for our more rural peers to continue to provide quality public health services. We understand that changing the minimum without a budget increase would negatively impact the larger counties, and hence why we support HB 2248 and its language that only increases the minimum if at least \$3 million is allocated into this formula (the allocation has been at \$2.2 million since 1992). At \$3 million departments like mine will also see an increase versus what we receive at the \$2.2 million allocation level.

\$7,000 does not go very far today, but a \$15,000 threshold would allow rural counties to achieve better public health outcomes. The law will still require a local match equal to the state's share and has penalties if local tax revenue allocations drop versus the prior year. Local government will continue to pay its fair share. This bill, on its own, has no fiscal impact (minimum payments only activate if enough funding is there for them, otherwise equal distribution of available funds happens). It is for these reasons my health department supports HB 2248 and asks that the committee report it favorably for passage.

For my department, an increase in the State Formula would primarily be used to work on the social determinants of health. The link between social determinants and health outcomes is well established, and we know that the greatest improvements to the quality and quantity of life a person experiences can only be achieved by working in these areas. Local health departments are chief health strategists for their communities (the delivery of interventions is system wide, but how that system communicates with itself is a major struggle we must take on as local public health). Due to stagnant funding our ability to tackle social determinants has been limited due to sporadic grant opportunities and collaborative, low-cost projects. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Lynnette Redington, Director, Harvey County Health Department

<sup>1</sup> Current planned SFY 2022 state formula distribution figures are available at:

<https://kchap2.kdhe.state.ks.us/KGMS/KGMSContent/documents/SF/2022%20SF/SFY2022%20State%20Formula%20Population-Award%20.pdf>

Harvey County Health Department is committed to protecting the public's health and environment, preventing disease, and promoting healthy living.