



Wallace County Health Department

P.O. Box 457 ♦ 104 E. 4th Street ♦ Sharon Springs, KS 67758

Phone: (785) 852-4272 ♦ Fax: (785) 852-4249 ♦ Email: wchd@wallacecoks.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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

Chairman Billinger and Members of the Committee:

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 tweaks 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.

As a health department currently receiving the \$7,000 minimum (a value that 68 of the 105 counties receive)¹ we view this update as critical to our ability to provide state-mandated services. The \$7,000 just does not go very far today but a \$15,000 threshold would allow us to achieve better outcomes (be they internal spending choices, partnering with other local health departments to jointly share an expense, or a variety of other means to better improve and protect the health of our residents). 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.

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). 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. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aften Gardner ADM".

Aften Gardner, Administrator
Wallace County Health Department

¹ 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>