



Written Testimony of
Melissa Colbern M.D.
Executive/Medical Director of
Mary's Choices (Pregnancy Resource Center)
In support of
Pregnancy Compassion Act (PCA). HB 2789

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Pregnancy Compassion Act (PCA). I am Melissa Colbern.

I graduated summa cum laude from Kansas State University in May 1992. I graduated from the University of Kansas Medical School in December 1996. I graduated from Via Christ Family Medicine Residency in Wichita in June 2000. I received the Outstanding First Year Resident award in 1998 and the Top Resident of the 54-resident program in 2000. I am a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.

I practiced traditional Family Medicine (to include obstetrics) at St. Francis Hospital in Topeka, KS from July 2000 until October 2013. I received the Best of Topeka Top 5 Doctors in 2010 and the Best of Topeka #1 Doctor in 2011, 2012, 2013.

I have worked in urgent care telemedicine, since May 2014 to the present time, for the same company and have a license to practice medicine in over forty states.

I left traditional family medicine because I founded Mary's Choices, a pregnancy resource center, in 2012. The obligations of this center precluded a traditional family practice. Therefore, I work overnights as a telemedicine urgent care physician and work days as the Executive and Medical Director of Mary's Choices.

At Mary's Choices, our mission is to support women with unplanned pregnancies. We provide counseling by medical professionals and provide information about the mother's options: parenting, adoption, and abortion. We perform free pregnancy tests and ultrasounds. These ultrasounds not only date the pregnancy but help the mother and extended family bond with the baby. We also aid the mothers with scheduling obstetrical care, applying for a medical card and food aid, and helping with other needs the mother may have. Mary's Choices will become a Presumptive Eligibility portal later this month for these mothers, making their process of applying for medical care even easier.

Mary's Choices has served over 2,600 women since opening our doors in 2012.

We are proud of our Earn While You Learn program that provides educational videos, companionship, and material support to mothers who have chosen life. Mothers may take part in our program through pregnancy and until their baby is two years old. The mothers watch one educational video monthly and receive a box of baby supplies for each child under two. The average value of this box is \$182. 110 mothers and 131 babies actively took part in our program in 2023.

Our Earn While You Learn program has grown from nineteen moms monthly taking part in 2019 to 70 moms taking part last month here at Mary's Choices.

In 2023, Mary's Choices provided \$73,000 in baby supplies which included 1,928 packs of diapers, 910 packs of baby wipes, 2750 baby outfits, 1,265 hygiene products, and 367 new books.

Due to our growing number of mothers needing support, we are requiring more baby supplies than ever before to provide this support to the mothers.

The Alternatives to Abortion/ Pregnancy Compassion Act (PCA) has been an unbelievably valuable resource for us to help fund our programs to support mothers and babies.

We hope that providing companionship, education, and material support, we can make a difference that will allow mothers to feel supported enough to carry their baby to term and to give them what they need to help their babies grow into loved, wanted children.

The Pregnancy Compassion Act provides invaluable resources to support Mary's Choices mission.

Please vote to support the Pregnancy Compassion Act which will help support Mary's Choices' mission:

Supporting Life, inside the Womb and Out