



To: Senate Health and Public Welfare Committee
From: Sonja Bachus, CEO, Community Care Network of Kansas
RE: Senate Bill 6
February 9, 2023

Chair Beverly Gossage and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity for Community Care Network of Kansas to present this neutral written testimony regarding to Senate Bill 6.

The COVID-19 pandemic for nearly three years posed the most significant health challenge many Kansans have or will ever face. During the both the early and continuing months of the pandemic, the more than thirty Community Care Network of Kansas member clinics faced a myriad of uncertainties while attempting to keep both their staff and patients as safe as human and clinically possible.

During this time, both Community Care as a primary care association and member clinics relied heavily on guidance and support from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), local health departments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Specifically in Kansas, KDHE clinical, public health and healthcare leadership experts acted in the best interest of Kansans as they helped guide Kansas through those very critical times.

We acknowledge that some of the decisions that officials have to make during a public health crisis can have serious consequences for communities, businesses, and individuals. Those decisions should not be entered into lightly. We know that many people experienced some of these consequences as public health officials across the nation tried to avoid a full-blown pandemic in the early days of COVID-19. Nevertheless, while it is our and many others' hopes that Kansans will never have to face a similar or worse public health emergency, the authority of the Secretary of Health and Environment and local public health departments is an important component of a swift and coordinated response to these events, and given the unpredictability of events that can threaten public health, we ask the Legislature to give careful consideration to any action that could impair KDHE's ability to respond.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this statement.