

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2034

January 25, 2023

Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Johnson, and Members of the House Child Welfare & Foster Care Committee:

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) represents more than 450 practicing pediatricians in the state. The KAAP has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas can grow up safe and strong. It is with this goal in mind that we would like to share our support for **HB 2034** which creates the CARE Provider Network.

KDHE, DCF and KAAP have been collaborating on the coordination of the CARE program since July 2022 and we are pleased to be able to report the progress that has been made. We applaud your interest in assuring that every potential case of child maltreatment is thoroughly investigated and agree that is the goal we should be working towards. Thank you to the 2022 Legislature for enacting a proviso which has helped provide a foundation for this network. While the proviso is a great first step in establishing the CARE provider network, permanent law will be key in helping the network reach its full potential to serve Kansas kids and save young lives. Passing HB 2034 is necessary to sustain this program.

Since July regular meetings have taken place with key stakeholders including KDHE, DCF and the Kansas Chapter, KAAP to move the CARE program forward and provide the best possible follow up for child physical abuse and neglect reports. Accomplishments since July 1, 2022 include:

1. **Creation of the CARE Network:** Increased the workforce physicians who are CARE Providers throughout the state, especially in rural areas. **There are now 28 trained CARE providers in 14 Kansas communities.** A CARE Provider is a medical provider who participated in the initial (September 29-30) and ongoing training on the medical evaluation of child maltreatment, including recognition of abusive injuries and testing and treatment for children when abuse is suspected. Training and ongoing mentorship is provided by board certified child abuse pediatricians in Kansas (Wichita and Kansas City). Increasing the number of local physicians across the state with expertise in the medical evaluation of child maltreatment allows children to receive appropriate high quality medical care in their communities, decreasing burdens on families and investigators, and also provides additional local resources for law enforcement and DCF specialists who investigate abuse concerns. Child advocacy centers have been included in training opportunities because they include interdisciplinary teams that are key partners in this work.
2. **Creation of Statewide Referral System:** KDHE has contracted with KU-CPPR to customize the IRIS database and referral system which will be used to manage the chain

of information between providers and agencies in a secure and efficient manner. This is an existing online community referral system that is already in use in many areas of the state, which is being adapted to meet the needs of this program. It will allow the CARE Referrals to be sent by DCF to the CARE Resource Centers for review and recommendation on the need for medical care and will also allow the local CARE Providers to access and share pertinent information in a confidential way. Additionally, this system will allow for data tracking and program evaluation.

- 3. Payment system:** KDHE has a payment system in place for CARE Exams performed by CARE Providers and for the triage system. The approved CARE Providers bill the state for each exam they perform using the payment form created in collaboration with the medical resource centers.

CARE Program Impact Since July 2022



Red hearts in the image represent CARE providers, blue hearts are where child abuse pediatricians are located in the medical resource centers.

- The first CARE provider training was held at the Child Advocacy Center in Salina on September 29 and 30. 11 Physicians, 12 APRN, and 1 PA-C attended.

- Many more Physicians and medical providers across the state have expressed interest in becoming trained when a second training is offered.
- 28 physicians and other medical providers are currently part of the KS CARE Network (this includes board-certified child abuse pediatricians).
- Any provider who is not a board-certified child abuse pediatrician is receiving active mentoring on each exam they complete from a board-certified child abuse pediatrician.
- The KS CARE ECHO training series is be a monthly webinar to continue to train KS CARE Providers on forensic medical exams. This series began in January 2023 and will run monthly through June. Currently there are 21 medical providers registered for this program.
- The IRIS system is being customized and is currently scheduled to launch in the Kansas City region early 2023. Once the Kansas City region has tested the system and adjusted it will be rolled out statewide.

The CARE Program is Working – an update from a Child Abuse Pediatrician

“Earlier this week, I had three young children referred to me by DCF for medical evaluation of child abuse and neglect. Our team was able to quickly get the children scheduled here in Wichita. However, on the morning of the appointment, they called to reschedule. The children had been moved to a foster home in another part of the state. This is not an uncommon scenario. The case worker expressed concern of hardship on the foster family (the kids) in traveling to Wichita. No problem! Dr. David Smith is a pediatrician and trained CARE Provider in Hutchinson, KS (only about 30 miles away). I reached out to him and made a warm handoff. Although he has a very busy practice, he recognized these evaluations as important. He was able to rearrange his schedule to get all three children seen quickly. This saved the foster family hours of driving. I also trust that Dr. Smith will be reviewing the cases with his mentor, my colleague Dr. Kathy Melhorn.”

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jennifer Hansen & Dr. Emily Killough, MD, FAAP