



To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Rachelle Colombo
Executive Director

Date: February 6, 2024

Subject: HB 2548; The No Patient Left Alone Act

The Kansas Medical Society (KMS) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of HB 2548; The No Patient Left Alone Act. KMS represents physicians in all specialties statewide.

HB 2548 establishes new requirements related to visitation rights for terminally ill patients or those receiving end-of-life care in hospitals, adult-care homes and hospice facilities. While each of these facilities must consider the overall risk and best practices to protect the staff providing care and all patients, these policies should also balance the importance of humane treatment at the end of life.

Organized medicine recognizes the importance of allowing dying patients the comfort of physical presence of loved ones during the transition of death. Studies show that patients that do not die alone experience less pain and utilize less anxiety medication at the end of life.

While not all instances allow an individual to have a visitor by their side at the time of death, to the extent it can be reasonably allowed without jeopardizing the health of others, it should be accommodated. HB 2548 allows hospitals, adult-care homes and hospice facilities to establish restrictions on visitation, including intensive care units, infection disease protocols and limitations on environments which cannot accommodate visitation, such as an operating room. With few exceptions, visitors willing to comply with appropriate restrictions should be granted access to dying patients.

Finally, it is important to note that HB 2548 represents a balance between the concern of patients and their families, health care facilities, and requirements for federal funding. The bill also includes specific definitions which protect patients from unwelcome visitation. The bill is respectfully and appropriately drafted to avoid unintended but well-intentioned consequences.

Families, patients, and staff benefit by allowing loved ones at the bedside of dying patients. KMS respectfully requests your support of HB 2548.