

**Testimony in support of HB2031
House Health and Human Service Committee**

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Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee,

I write from the perspective of Spiritual Care. I have served as an ordained pastor for over ten years, and as Staff Chaplain at Wesley Healthcare since 2013. A primary focus of my work as Chaplain has been to champion the development of Palliative Care at Wesley.

Serious illness significantly alters life. In the moment of serious diagnosis or traumatic event the life stories, and the meaning of those stories, are the best foundation on which to shape the patients future. **An essential element of Palliative Care is to listen deeply to the patient and their families to learn of the values, goals and interests of the patient,** and to bring those wishes to the Interdisciplinary treatment decision-making meetings.

When we are faced with our mortality we are best able discern how we want to live. This moment brings a deep honesty to our relationships with those closest to us, and to our relationship with God. Data has shown that when those key relationships are cared for that a patient is best placed to make decisions to **enhance the quality of their life while living with a serious illness;** and take the time make their wishes known with their loved ones and the medical team in preparation for their dying time.

Palliative Care Teams combine medical information, resources of comprehensive care, and skills to take on the emotional and spiritual challenges of serious illness. **This team is well situated to enhance the life of the patient and family, and to guide the dying time within the values, goals, wishes of the patient.** When this is well implemented data has shown notable improvement in patient satisfaction and care-giver satisfaction. And, as patients do the hard work of facing their mortality, they better understand when extensive measures no longer enhance life, and begin to only prolong suffering.

It appears that our society is increasingly open to learn about our mortality, and how to learn from our mortality to shape our life in the way that is most true to what is most life-giving. We are now presented with an opportunity to be innovative, to train, and to coordinate all healthcare disciplines to enhance the life of the citizens of Kansas.

This legislation would greatly benefit the effort to **improve the quality of life for patients and families,** and work to **preserve valuable healthcare resources.**