

HB 2031 Testimony (written only)

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Senate Public Health and Welfare

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The Kansas Chapter, National Association of Social Workers (KNASW) is the professional association working on behalf of the profession and practice of social work in Kansas. Social workers have been licensed at three levels of practice since 1976. These are the baccalaureate (LBSW), the master (LMSW), and the independent clinical social worker (LSCSW). We are the largest group of mental health providers with over 7000 social workers practicing in the majority of the 105 counties in Kansas. The practice of social work is performed in many fields including adoptions, addictions, aging, child welfare, courts and corrections, corporations and businesses, domestic violence, early childhood, hospitals and health, hospice and palliative care, poverty prevention programs, mental health, community based prevention, problem gambling, pre-schools and schools, trauma, veterans and military, research and teaching, and more. We work in both the public and private sectors of the economy. Social workers serve thousands of Kansans every day.

KNASW supports HB 2031.

The legislation would create a palliative care interdisciplinary advisory council. The council would develop information and access to resources for both providers and consumers.

Palliative care is an interdisciplinary model of care focused on relief of the pain, stress and other debilitating symptoms of serious, complex and eventually terminal illness. It includes hospice care. Its goal is to minimize suffering and provide the best possible quality of life for patients and their families. The key to effective palliative care is the interdisciplinary approach to care. The council would reflect this essential component by including medical, nursing, social work, pharmacy and spiritual guidance in its membership.

The NASW Standards for Palliative and End of Life Care states that the “complexity of issues includes aspects such as weighing risk and benefit; allocation of individual, family and societal resources; and the recognition of changing goals of care. It concerns individuals deepest and most dearly held fears, values, and beliefs. Palliative and end of life issues are often delicate and controversial and require skilled, insightful interdisciplinary care.”

The advancement of medical technology, rising rates of chronic illness, increasing number of elderly individuals and longer life spans contributes to the growing need for providers who can serve this population and for consumers to be aware of and able to access the care they need when they need it.

Thank you for your consideration.