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Testimony in Support of HB 2121

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Honorable Chair – Vicki Schmidt

Vice Chair – Barbara Bollier

Ranking Minority – Laura Kelly

Honorable Committee Members

Good morning Ms. Chairman and other esteemed Representatives of the Committee.
Thank you for the opportunity in support of Bill Number 2121.

As a new member of the 'lower house', my world view experience is that of a Family Physician who has practiced primary care for over 35 years and learned first hand that immunizations are the single biggest scientific medical innovation to improve population health and save lives in the history of all of medicine. Immunizations are the bedrock of preventative health care in Kansas and the US. For 12 years we have had a robust tool to register and monitor all vaccinations given in our state (minus influenza) which can enhance and improve how we manage preventative health in this state.

That tool is WEB-IZ. This digital tool was conceived by the Governor's Task Force on Immunizations, in 1992. The concept grew out of a "think tank" of physicians, KDHE officials, and public health nurses as one of the many ways to improve pediatric immunizations rates in Kansas, which were abysmal at that time. And after 12 years of planning, designing, and tweaking different softwares (KIIS), WEB-IZ was unveiled for providers in 2005.

So what is it and why the big deal? It is an immunization information registry that is a statewide network tool that all immunization providers can participate. This site is designed to receive all information entered into it by any provider of immunization services in Ks. This would include public

health clinics, physicians, and pharmacists as they register what vaccines were administered and on what date. Obviously by having a central registry of all vaccines this prevents duplication and unnecessary administration of the same vaccines, giving them too soon, or missing opportunities for patients when they are right there in your office. It is a fantastic digital methodology to help all Kansas patients get the right vaccines at the right time to promote safety and optimal preventative health care. An added public health benefit is disease trending and geographic mapping of which counties need more help administering and keeping their rates caught up.

All states have immunization registries similar to ours. Like ours they are digitally secure in the information they store and are only accessible to those providers that administer vaccines. As a practicing physician I couldn't practice without the information that WEB-IZ affords me many times every day. The system has evolved to the place that we now depend on this software to inform us as to what vaccinations are due for each patient on each visit. And as you understand that there are more vaccines than ever with a more complicated schedule for providers, e.g. Zostavax, Prevnar-13, Pneumovac, Tdap, Hep-B, etc., this digital information potentially saves lives every day in our state. And please understand that parents and guardians can opt out of this registry if they want to. It's right there on the consent for vaccination form that they sign at each visit for each immunization. Over 99% of parents and guardians participate because they get it--they understand the importance of WEB-IZ in the preventative health of their children and adolescents.

All providers of vaccinations should participate in WEB-IZ. Pharmacists and public health clinics are required to do this under current statute. The only providers that don't across the board are physicians--family physicians (like me), pediatricians, and internists. The last report that I could find for reliable data showed an approximate 57% participation rate by doctors that give vaccines. So why don't more physicians participate? Because of the complexities of EMRs and the increasing complexity of the immunization schedule and all its many recommendations. In some cases double data entry was necessary because not all EMRs interface well with WEB-IZ. It has been a big digital hassle and an increase in overhead costs. But recent advancements in WEB-IZ make this transition much easier now. The connectivity is better and easier than ever. I am even aware of some grant money available to help those physicians not connected yet make the transition. And to facilitate the transition we have given all providers 3 years to get this done. The time is right for this measure to go forward .

Please understand that Kansas is not the first state to require participation in their registry for vaccinations. 16 other states have similar requirements already. 10 other states have strong incentives for participation. The opportunity for this to happen is here. Welcome to Health Care of our digital world. I very much appreciate this opportunity to give testimony today and your support of HB 2121.