



Thomas L. Bell
President

TO: Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

FROM: Deborah Stern, RN, JD
Senior Vice President, Clinical Services and General Counsel

DATE: February 12, 2018

RE: Senate Bill 338 - Opposition

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 338. The proposed legislation would establish requirements related to surgical technologists. It is our belief this legislation is not needed as Kansas hospitals already take necessary steps to ensure that surgical technologists/scrub techs practicing in their facilities have received appropriate training.

Surgical technologists/scrub techs work in the operating room under the supervision of a physician and an operating room registered nurse. Individuals that carry out these tasks have either received training at community colleges, technical schools or have been provided on-the-job training. The role of the surgical technologists/scrub techs is to assist in maintaining the operating room by selecting and opening sterile supplies, setting-up equipment for surgical procedures and providing the necessary sterile items in a timely manner.

We have discussed this legislation with our members and they are comfortable with the level of skills of these employees whether they have been formally trained or trained on the job. This is an entry level position that is difficult to fill (12.5 percent vacancy rate) and has a high turnover rate (17.7 percent).

Kansas hospitals have undertaken many quality initiatives, including reducing the number of surgical site infections. According to the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative, a joint venture between the Kansas Medical Society and the Kansas Hospital Association, surgical site infections have dropped by more than 33 percent over the past several years. This accomplishment has been attained through targeted efforts in assessing the competency of staff providing services in the operating room. Furthermore, we have no evidence to support there has been patient harm resulting from the use of surgical technicians/scrub techs that have been trained on the job.

Before adding additional regulatory requirements, KHA would propose that those parties supporting this legislation follow the statutory requirements as outlined in K.S.A. 65-5001 et. seq. This process requires that any new group seeking to be regulated must complete a credentialing application and follow a detailed process to have the application evaluated by a technical committee appointed by the secretary.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Kansas Hospital Association

215 SE 8th Ave. • PO Box 2308 • Topeka, KS 66601-2308 • (785) 233-7436 • FAX: (785) 233-6955 • www.kha-net.org