



Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION

TO: House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Audrey Dunkel, Vice President of Government Relations

DATE: March 18, 2021

RE: Senate Bill 283

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comments supporting Senate Bill 283 on behalf of our 122 community hospital members.

Kansas hospitals continue to serve on the frontlines in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The flexibilities implemented under Senate Bill 14 have allowed hospitals to address staffing shortages, maintain safe access to care for patients, and make necessary adjustments to the provision of care to keep patients safe without fear of legal repercussions.

Since the passage of Senate Bill 14 in January of this year, we are pleased to report the conditions have improved significantly. However, as this committee knows, we are far from done addressing COVID-19. Extension of the liability coverage for Kansas healthcare providers, in addition to the regulatory relief, is necessary for Kansas hospitals to maintain access to quality care as we push through what we hope is the final phase of this pandemic.

The Kansas Hospital Association has reviewed all of the flexibilities contained within Senate Bill 14 and worked with our members to identify the key provisions they believe are necessary to maintain patient care levels, even if conditions regarding COVID-19 case rates fluctuate in the days ahead. Those provisions included in Senate Bill 283 are as follows:

- Extension of liability protections for healthcare providers allows continued response without exposing healthcare facilities, which are already financially vulnerable to litigation with serious financial consequences.
- Extension of the authorization for a hospital to exceed licensed bed capacity should a particular region see a surge in cases and allows hospitals to utilize non-hospital space for testing, triaging, or patient care.
- Extension of telemedicine flexibilities that allow physicians to issue a prescription for or order to administer medication for a patient without conducting an in-person examination.
- Language streamlining an out-of-state physician's ability to receive emergency licensure and provide telemedicine to respond to COVID-19.

The continuation of these flexibilities is vital to addressing the last phases of the COVID-19 response efforts.

Thank you for your continued support of Kansas hospitals.