



To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Rachelle Colombo; Executive Director

Date: January 23, 2023

Re: HB 2023; Interference with conduct of hospital and increase of criminal penalties for battery of healthcare providers

The Kansas Medical Society is the only statewide association advocating for physicians in every specialty and is dedicated to improving the environment in which Kansas physicians practice medicine, and to protecting the health of Kansas' citizens. We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2023.

The bill creates the crime of interference with the conduct of a hospital, providing criminal penalties for violation thereof and increasing the criminal penalties for battery of a healthcare provider who is employed by a hospital. This legislation is modeled after similar Kansas statutes designed to provide protections to other first responders, including those in the EMS, fire and law enforcement communities. KMS would request that the bill be amended to expand the settings to include all defined healthcare facilities.

Healthcare providers in any workplace setting, including physicians, are confronted daily with challenges in an already high-stress environment. From staffing shortages, medical emergencies and the lingering impacts of the pandemic, healthcare providers across the state endure. Physicians readily joined the healthcare workforce knowing they would encounter these challenges, but they didn't expect to be subject to violent physical interference and attacks while performing their critical, often life-saving duties. KMS believes HB 2023 can serve as a deterrent and increase awareness when these violent criminals are held to more account.

Kansas is not alone when it comes to addressing these crimes. This is a national problem and other states have adopted similar legislation designed to curb these attacks. We respectfully request your support of HB 2023 and urge you to favorably recommend its passage.