KANSAS CHAPTER
American Academy of Pediatrics
Incorporated in Kansas

785.380.6100 KansasAAP.org PO Box 860481, Shawnee, KS 66286

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2374
Submitted by the Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP)

Chair Erickson & Members of the Senate Education Committee:

The **Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP)** represents pediatricians across the state who care for infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. On behalf of Kansas pediatricians and the families they serve, KAAP submits written testimony in **support of HB 2374**, legislation to expand and modernize the Kansas Medical Student Loan (KMSL) program.

HB 2374 is an **important step toward addressing Kansas' persistent physician workforce shortages** and improving access to care for children and families, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

The original Kansas Medical Student Loan program served Kansas well. However, statutory limitations now reduce its ability to meet current workforce needs:

- **Limited flexibility in funding allocation.** Current program structure ties funding to specific disciplines, leaving no mechanism to support additional qualified students even when there are unmet needs and available interest from Kansas trainees.
- **Demand exceeds available funding.** Each year, more Kansas medical students are willing to commit to serving Kansas communities than the program can support.
- **Narrow eligibility criteria.** The statute does not reflect the full scope of physician shortages facing Kansas, including shortages in pediatrics, general surgery, and other key specialties necessary for comprehensive community-based care.

HB 2374 would modernize the program by allowing Kansas to align loan support with actual workforce needs rather than fixed specialty categories. This flexibility is essential to building a sustainable physician workforce.

From a pediatric perspective, this bill is particularly important.

Children in rural Kansas already face significant barriers to care, including long travel distances for specialty services, limited access to pediatric subspecialists, and fewer local options for preventive and developmental care. When pediatricians, pediatric surgeons, and other child-serving specialists are not available locally, families experience delays in care, increased financial strain, and disruptions to school and family life.

Strengthening programs that recruit and retain physicians in underserved areas supports:

- Improved access to preventive and primary pediatric care
- Better continuity of care for children with chronic or complex medical needs
- Reduced strain on families who must otherwise travel long distances for care
- Stronger local health systems capable of supporting maternal, newborn, and child health

Kansas University Medical Center leadership has recognized the need for similar reforms in recent years, and **HB 2374 aligns with statewide efforts to ensure that Kansas trains and retains physicians to meet the needs of its communities**.

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HB 2374 represents a practical, forward-looking investment in Kansas' health workforce and, importantly, in the health and well-being of Kansas children and families.

For these reasons, the **Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics respectfully supports HB 2374**.

Respectfully submitted,

Dena K. Hubbard, MD, FAAP
Chair, Public Policy Committee
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