



**Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION**

TO: House Federal and State Affairs

FROM: Tara Mays, Vice President State Legislative Relations

Date: February 9, 2023

RE: HB 2269

The Kansas Hospital Association (KHA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 2269 on behalf of the 123 community hospital members.

It is estimated that a Tobacco 21 law would affect nearly 250,000 Kansans age 15-20. With over 54 percent of daily adult smokers are smoking daily before age 18, 85 percent are smoking daily before age 21, and 94 percent are smoking daily before age 25. If someone is not a regular smoker by age 25, it is highly unlikely they will become one. ¹ Raising the minimum legal age of sales of tobacco could help delay and reduce smoking rates in Kansas.

Tobacco is the number one source of preventable disease worldwide and is responsible for approximately one in five deaths in the United States. Every year, nearly 4,000 Kansans die from diseases that are directly related to tobacco use. As health care providers, we feel it is necessary to take a stand to stop the use of tobacco.

Like many statewide smoking laws enacted in Kansas over the last three decades, implementation of these important public policies took time; it was, after all, a culture change. The same will be true with the passage and implementation of HB 2269. It must not be forgotten that tobacco use is not a right; it is a privilege that should be restricted when it is detrimental to others.

Kansas hospitals are focused on providing positive health outcomes for the patients they serve in their communities across Kansas. HB 2269 could help improve the health of young Kansans.

¹ Kansas Health Institute, Tobacco 21 in Kansas: February 2019. https://www.khi.org/assets/uploads/news/14901/t21_handout.pdf