

## Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 2390

To the members of the Kansas House Health & Human Services Committee,

I would like to thank you for holding a hearing on HB 2390, which if enacted, would be instrumental in our state's efforts to address the fentanyl poisoning crisis.

From August 2021 to August 2022, there were an estimated 691 drug overdose deaths in Kansas. Of those 691 drug overdose deaths, nearly two-thirds involved opioids (n = 440, 64%). Moreover, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl accounted for more than 80% of opioid overdose deaths (n = 357, 81%). The prevalence and dangers of illicitly manufactured fentanyl in our communities warrants an overdose fatality review (OFR) board and statewide access to fentanyl test strips (FTS).

Having an overdose fatality review board for the state of Kansas would be instrumental in better understanding the risk and protective factors to drug overdoses. OFR boards in other states are collaborative in nature, integrating the unique perspectives and insights of public health agencies, public safety agencies, mental health and SUD treatment providers, and community members (especially those in recovery and/or who have lost loved ones to drug overdose). OFR boards investigate the important (but often-neglected) questions as to why a fatal drug overdose happened in the first place and how it could have been prevented. An OFR board for the state of Kansas could address the various siloes that exist between stakeholders, helping ensure a more data-driven, intentional, and efficient approach in the fentanyl poisoning crisis.

Likewise, allowing families, substance use prevention coalitions, recovery groups, and SUD treatment providers access to fentanyl test strips in no way condones drug use, but acknowledges the reality of the fentanyl poisoning crisis. As the founder and volunteer of a free community-based naloxone program in Wichita, access to fentanyl test strips would allow us to meet people with substance use issues where they're at, building an important relationship that will eventually get them connected to treatment and recovery.

I can be reached via [nxvuong1@outlook.com](mailto:nxvuong1@outlook.com) or (316) 516-3078 if you would like additional information on the strong empirical support for overdose fatality review and fentanyl test strips.

Ngoc Vuong (pronunciation: NOK VAWNG)