



Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION

TO: Senate Commerce Committee

FROM: Tara Mays, Vice President State Legislative Relations

DATE: March 8, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 282

The Kansas Hospital Association appreciates the opportunity to provide written comment on Senate Bill 282 on behalf of our 123 community hospital members.

Kansas health care facilities are committed to serving our communities by providing the highest levels of care to all that walk through our doors. As health care organizations, we have broadly felt the impacts of the health care workforce shortage that has gripped the industry over the last few years. It is more important than ever to ensure our health care organizations can pursue new strategies to address workforce issues. Our hospitals continue to emphasize the need to address workforce challenges in Kansas. Among the top priority items consistently highlighted by our hospitals is the need to provide more flexibility to make childcare options more robust here in Kansas.

Based on the 2022 KHA data, there currently are an estimated 5,150 vacant positions throughout the Kansas hospital system. The highest demand positions, with a vacancy rate of 16%, include: Sterile Processing Technicians, Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), Nurse Assistants (CNA), Staff Nurse (RN), Respiratory Therapist, Medical Lab Technicians, and Pharmacy Technicians. These numbers are at historic levels, and we must do all that we can to ensure we have qualified professionals to fill these positions.

We recognize Senate Bill 282 is one approach to start addressing the childcare challenges facing Kansas residents and businesses. Regardless if Senate Bill 282 is ultimately adopted, we strongly urge the Kansas legislature to explore policies and funding opportunities to provide relief to making childcare more accessible and affordable. Our Kansas hospitals, both rural and urban, have highlighted a need for malleability in how we approach childcare in Kansas during this critical time. Many seek flexibility and the need to streamline the oversight processes to ensure quick response times for licensing requests, inspections, and requests for flexibility in things like training requirements. We hope that the work of the legislature and the recently created Early Childhood Transition Task Force can produce needed reforms to address childcare challenges in Kansas.

Kansas hospitals want to have a workforce that can serve the patients in our state. A large part of a robust workforce hinges on an adequate childcare network. We appreciate this committee's interest in exploring options to address ways that we can assist with the childcare shortage in Kansas at a time when workforce issues are such a high priority for the healthcare industry.