

Testimony for HB2489

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HB2489- Requiring school districts to provide Fentanyl abuse education programs and maintain supplies of Naloxone in each school.

Proponent

February 5th 2026

My name is Rebecca Bost and I am a Kansas Certified Peer Mentor for an inpatient rehab facility for women specializing in substance use disorder. Through my work I have seen countless teens and adults struggling with Fentanyl addiction. These addictions did not start at 18 or 19, or later in life. They began in the early years of adolescence. These women struggle to rebuild their lives after having an addiction that takes so much from them.

The fight to combat illicit Fentanyl use is understandably daunting. Each year Fentanyl specifically becomes more potent and more unpredictable, making both dependence and withdrawal increasingly severe. In treatment, we frequently see clients who did not seek help for Fentanyl use specifically, yet still test positive for it. Many are shocked to learn that their drug of choice was unknowingly laced with Fentanyl. This speaks to a critical truth: for many individuals exposure is not intentional but the consequences are life-threatening.

So what can be done to stop it? To stop Fentanyl overdose, and addictions that start early in life? Education. It is imperative that we educate our teens and their teachers on the impacts of Fentanyl addiction and overdose. Many people are not aware of how dangerous Fentanyl is. Before my work as a peer mentor, I knew Fentanyl was very bad, and that was it, just very bad. Now I recognize how truly heinous Fentanyl is, and how essential and urgent the need for education is early in life.

To help end Fentanyl addiction and overdose, I strongly support HB2489. Ignoring this issue will only lead to more addictions and more lives lost. Please protect our children's futures. Thank you for your time.