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HB 2489-Requiring school districts to provide fentanyl abuse education programs and maintain supplies of naloxone in each school
Neutral Written Testimony
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Chairwoman Estes and members of the committee-

The Kansas School Nurses Organization (KSNO) represents the dedicated school nurses serving students across our state. We appreciate the opportunity to provide neutral testimony regarding House Bill 2489, Requiring school districts to provide fentanyl abuse education programs and maintain supplies of naloxone in each school.

School nurses are on the front lines of student health. We are acutely aware of the opioid crisis and the devastating impact fentanyl is having on families in Kansas. While we strongly support the intent of this bill, to save lives and educate student, we must highlight concerns regarding the practical application of these mandates on local school districts.

Support for Naloxone Access and Education

KSNO aligns with the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) in advocating for the availability of naloxone in schools. NASN's position is clear: the safe and effective management of opioid-related overdoses should be incorporated into school emergency preparedness plans.

Current Practice: It is important to note that Kansas statutes already allow schools to stock and administer naloxone. Many districts across the state have already taken the initiative to stock Narcan voluntarily, recognizing it as a vital safety measure similar to an AED.

Education: We strongly support the educational component of this bill. However, we recommend broadening the language to require education on opioids and substance abuse generally, rather than limiting the scope strictly to "fentanyl." While fentanyl is the current urgent crisis, the landscape of drug abuse evolves. A broader curriculum ensures students are educated on the dangers of the entire class of opioids, providing more comprehensive prevention.

Concerns Regarding Mandates and Local Control

While we support the concept of HB 2489, we have significant reservations about the mandates it imposes.

Unfunded Mandates and Sustainability: The bill requires every school building to maintain a stock supply of naloxone. While we acknowledge the bill mentions the "Kansas Fights

Addiction Fund" for grants, we remain concerned about the long-term financial burden on districts.

Grant Uncertainty: Grants are often temporary or competitive. If grant funding dries up, the legal mandate to stock the medication remains, shifting the cost entirely to the district's general fund.

Supply Costs: Currently, DCCCA (Douglas County Citizens Committee on Alcoholism) does an excellent job providing free naloxone kits to schools through state and federal grants. However, we do not know how long DCCCA will be able to sustain this level of funding. If this free source disappears, districts will be forced to purchase these supplies at market rates, along with the costs of replacing expired doses regularly.

Concerns about Local Control: Kansans value local control, and school districts vary wildly in size, resources, and staffing.

One Size Does Not Fit All: A mandate requiring stock in every school building may be excessive for smaller attendance centers or those with extremely low risk factors, whereas larger high schools may need multiple units. Districts are best positioned to assess their specific community needs and risks.

Staffing Realities: Not every school building in Kansas has a full-time school nurse. Mandating the medication without ensuring there is trained medical personnel (or adequately trained designated staff) in the building to manage the inventory and emergency response can create logistical liabilities. Who is going to train school staff how to recognize signs of opiate overdose and properly administer naloxone in districts without a school nurse?

Conclusion

The Kansas School Nurses Organization wants every student to be safe. We support the availability of naloxone and the implementation of robust drug education. However, we ask the committee to consider amending the legislation to allow for local decision-making regarding stock supplies or to ensure a permanent, guaranteed funding stream that does not rely on temporary grants or third-party non-profits.

We stand ready to work with the legislature to find a solution that protects Kansas students without placing sustainable financial burdens on our schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
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Kansas School Nurses Organization Legislative Chair