

**Proponent Testimony for HB2397
House Health and Human Services Committee
Cristi Cain, Director, Local Public Health Program
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Wednesday, March 5, 2025**

Chairperson Carpenter and Honorable Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of HB 2397. My name is Cristi Cain. I am currently the director of the Local Public Health Program at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment which provides training, technical assistance, funding and other support to the 100 local health departments (LHDs) across the state serving all 105 counties. Our program is responsible for awarding state general funds to the local health departments annually through the State Formula process established in K.S.A. 65-242 in 1982.

The purpose of HB 2397 is to adjust the statutory formula which has not been modified since at least SFY 1992. The minimum in statute is \$7,000 per local health department. Currently, 51 of the state's 105 counties receive the minimum allowed in statute. Seven more counties receive just over the minimum based on a population-based formula. These counties are all categorized as frontier or rural and all have shortages of health professionals, leaving the LHDs to fill in the gaps. There have been successful provisos obtained from SFY 2021 through SFY 2025, increasing funding for each LHD to \$12,000 annually; however, this is not a consistent method to ensure funding for our smaller, rural communities. It would be more efficient to establish the adjustment as a permanent measure. .

State Formula funding has been instrumental in supporting various public health activities, including preventive care programs, health education, and community outreach. However, as public health challenges evolve and new health priorities emerge, the existing minimum per health department has proven insufficient to meet growing demands and to implement impactful interventions, forcing the LHDs to re-evaluate programming and community needs.

Maintaining additional funding for smaller LHDs by increasing the minimum amount awarded by statutory formula allows them to extend their services to larger segments of their populations as well as better adapt and respond to changing public health needs and emergencies. By addressing health issues more effectively and reaching a wider audience, increased funding can contribute to long-term improvements in community health, reducing future healthcare costs and improving overall quality of life. Ultimately, increasing the

minimum funding amount for local health departments from \$7,000 to \$12,000 is a strategic investment in community health.

This bill has no direct fiscal impact. It simply restructures how the existing funding is awarded.

Thank you for your time and consideration as we encourage the passage of HB 2397.

Cristi Cain, MPH
Director, Local Public Health Program
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

References:

<https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/46333/2023-Underserved-Areas-Report-UAR-PDF>

https://www.ksrevisor.org/statutes/chapters/ch65/065_002_0042.html