



February 10, 2026

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Written-only Proponent Testimony on SB 448
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Chairwoman Gossage and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of SB 448, which would **permit the use of expedited partner therapy (EPT) to treat sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**, including chlamydia and gonorrhea. EPT is the practice of treating the sex partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea by proactively providing prescriptions or medications to the patient to take to his or her partners without the health care provider first examining the partner.

It may seem unusual for a kids' advocacy organization to weigh in on this bill, but **STIs can cause premature labor,¹ which is a leading cause infant death² and can lead to long-term developmental and health problems in children.³** Kansas' rate of preterm births has increased from 8.7% to 10.3% of all births between 2014 and 2024.⁴ While not directly linking the increase of these preterm births to STIs, any intervention that can lead to a potential reduction in preterm births should be pursued.

Also, STIs like gonorrhea and chlamydia can pass from the mother to her baby as the baby passes through the birth canal, leading to eye infections and pneumonia.⁵ Untreated gonorrhea and chlamydia can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility.⁶ EPT is an important public health tool to make available to healthy moms and babies.

¹ Office on Women's Health. (2025). *Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and breastfeeding*. <https://womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/stis-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>

² NCSL. (2025). *The First Year Matters: State Strategies to Prevent Infant Deaths*. <https://www.ncsl.org/health/the-first-year-matters-state-strategies-to-prevent-infant-deaths>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Preterm birth*. www.cdc.gov/maternal-infant-health/preterm-birth/

⁴ March of Dimes. (2025). *2025 March of Dimes Report Card for Kansas*. www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/kansas/report-card

⁵ Children's Minnesota. (2026). *Chlamydia in Newborns*. <https://www.childrensmn.org/educationmaterials/childrensmn/article/15339/chlamydia-in-newborns/>

⁶ Office on Women's Health. (2025). *Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and breastfeeding*. <https://womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/stis-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>

Why is this bill needed in Kansas? EPT is already legally authorized in 48 states, but not in Kansas (South Dakota is the other state).⁷ Additionally, the number of Kansas Multiple studies show that using EPT leads to reductions in both chlamydia and gonorrhea prevalence. As we previously described, EPT usage could also lead to reducing the rate of STIs in pregnant women and preventing transmission to their infants during the birthing process.

By authorizing EPT, SB 448 provides medical professionals an additional tool to proactively reduce the spread of STIs.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 448. We ask you to favorably move this bill out of your committee and get the policy across the finish line during the 2026 legislative session.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at heather@kac.org.

About Kansas Action for Children

KAC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. KAC does not receive any funding from local, state, or federal government sources; however, we have a keen interest in the state budget because of its impact on children and families.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025). *Legal Status of Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT)*. <https://www.cdc.gov/sti/php/ept-legal-status/index.html>