

**Testimony by Charlie Hunt with the  
Johnson County Department of Health & Environment (JCDHE) to  
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare  
Written Proponent for SB 448 – February 10, 2026**

Chair Gossage and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 448, a bill which would permit the use of expedited partner therapy (EPT) for the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). JCDHE's mission is to promote and protect the health and environment for all who live, work and play in Johnson County.

STI rates in Kansas nearly doubled from 2002 to 2022 (5.5 per 1000 to 9.3 per 1000). Over the same period, STI rates in Johnson County increased 255% (1.8 per 1000 to 4.6 per 1000). Among the health issues that can stem from STIs is premature labor, which is the leading cause of infant death and can lead to long-term developmental and health problems in children. In addition, infants can acquire chlamydia or gonorrhea during delivery which can lead to a variety of health complications such as eye infection and meningitis.<sup>1,2</sup>

A major challenge for prevention and control of STIs, particularly among young women, is high rates of reinfection from untreated sexual partners, who may be reluctant to seek care. EPT is the clinical practice of treating the sex partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia or gonorrhea by providing prescriptions or medications to the patient to take to their partner without the health care provider first examining the partner. When dispensing new prescriptions, pharmacists must offer counseling to the patient.<sup>3</sup> EPT is an evidence-based, scientifically supported strategy endorsed by leading medical, scientific, and legal organizations, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American Bar Association, and County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. EPT is safe and has been shown to reduce the incidence of STIs and increase treatment rates. Researchers conducting multi-site randomized trials and community-level studies of EPT for chlamydia and gonorrhea received no reports of anaphylaxis or other major adverse drug reactions.<sup>4</sup>

Currently, EPT is permissible in 48 states, making Kansas one of only two states that does not explicitly allow EPT.<sup>5</sup> Making EPT explicitly permissible under Kansas law would remove a potential barrier for healthcare providers to utilize this evidence-based strategy, thereby improving access to care for patients. As such, JCDHE asks that the committee recommend SB 448 favorably for passage.

Sincerely,

Charlie Hunt, Director  
Johnson County Department of Health & Environment

<sup>1</sup> CDC. (2025, January 31). *About chlamydia*. <https://www.cdc.gov/chlamydia/about/>

<sup>2</sup> CDC. (2022, September 21). *Gonococcal infections among neonates*. <https://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment-guidelines/gonorrhea-neonates.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Kan. Admin. Regs. § 68-2-20. [https://sos.ks.gov/publications/pubs\\_kar\\_Regs.aspx?KAR=68-2-20](https://sos.ks.gov/publications/pubs_kar_Regs.aspx?KAR=68-2-20)

<sup>4</sup> Golden, M. R., Kerani, R. P., Stenger, M., Hughes, J. P., Aubin, M., Malinski, C., & Holmes, K. T. (2015). Uptake and Population-Level Impact of Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT) on *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*: The Washington State Community-Level Randomized Trial of EPT. *PLoS Med*, 12(1). doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001777

<sup>5</sup> CDC. *Legal status of expedited partner therapy (EPT)*. Accessed February 5, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/sti/php/ept-legal-status/index.html>

