



GACHES, BRADEN & ASSOCIATES

Government Relations & Association Management

825 S. Kansas Avenue, Suite 500 ♦ Topeka, Kansas 66612 ♦ Phone: (785) 233-4512 ♦ Fax: (785) 233-2206

Testimony of the Kansas Occupational Therapy Association

Submitted by Ron Gaches

In opposition to HB 2159: concerning access to physical therapy

Submitted to the House Health and Human Services Committee

Monday, January 23, 2012

Thank you Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the committee for this opportunity to speak today regarding HB 2159, a proposal that would broaden access to the practice of physical therapy in Kansas. This proposal is generally termed a “direct access” bill.

While the Kansas Occupational Therapy Association is not against some changes in the patient access provided physical therapists, we believe this bill is not the right approach.

As currently drafted, the bill impacts only patient access to physical therapy. Similar bills have been considered in the past by the Legislature and not advanced. In addition to opposition from the medical communities, such bills are usually opposed by the Kansas Occupational Therapy Association and other specialty care and therapy providers. Part of the opposition usually stems from specific objections to the bill and other opposition stems from a single provider group seeking preferential access consideration in the law.

In the case of this specific proposal, our concerns are that the authority for continued direct access following an unsuccessful 45 day period of care is too open ended and should provide for some level of physician evaluation.

Looking at the access issue more broadly, the Kansas Occupational Therapy Association suggests that the Kansas Physical Therapy Association and other interested parties take a different approach. We

propose that all of the medical and therapy provider organizations collaborate in a comprehensive review of and modernization of the access laws for the purpose of broadening patient access and improving coordination of care in appropriate areas. This approach supports earlier feedback given to KPTA last year regarding the need for increased communication and collaboration with peer organizations and rehabilitation partners around issues of access.

This initiative is particularly appropriate given Governor Brownback's launch of the KanCare program for reform of the Kansas Medicaid system. Increased efficiency and collaboration in the delivery of health care services and improving quality of care are aggressive goals. We believe that a comprehensive modernization of patient access rules for all licensed therapists should be an important element of transforming our health care delivery system, including Medicaid.

For these reasons, KOTA recommends rejection of HB 2159 and starting a new more comprehensive and collaborative discussion about patient access.