

Testimony on SB106

To

House Health and Human Services Committee

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Secretary

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

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Chairman Morrison and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss SB106. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment enthusiastically supports the intent of SB106 to identify major health care issues in Kansas and to establish objectives and priorities. Responsibility for a statewide health planning process is appropriate for and well within the mission and goals of the state health agency. Successful implementation of the project will be contingent, however, upon identifying new resources necessary to complement existing resources to carry it out effectively.

Major gains have been made in public health during the past 40 years, to the point where acute and infectious diseases have been replaced by chronic diseases and injury as the leading causes of death. Kansas must remain diligent in addressing acute and infectious diseases, so as not to lose ground on the progress made. The progress made in infectious disease, combined with changes in lifestyle have given way to a new era in which chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, asthma and diabetes have become the leading causes of death, affecting over 100 million Americans and accounting for three-quarters of the nation's annual health care costs. (Institute for Health and Aging 1996) With the continued aging of the American population, both the prevalence and costs of chronic illness care are expected to rise by at least 15% by the year 2010 and by 60% by 2050. Yet, much of this growing chronic disease burden is preventable through more effective prevention and management. McGinnis and Forge (1993) estimate that 50% of mortality from the ten leading causes of death is attributable to lifestyle behaviors that cause or complicate chronic illness. Finding effective strategies for prevention and managing chronic disease will be a major challenge for health care in the 21<sup>ST</sup> Century.

Healthy People 2010 outlines a comprehensive, nationwide health promotion and disease prevention agenda. It is designed to serve as a roadmap for improving the health of all people in the US during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Like the preceding Healthy People 2000 initiative which was driven by an ambitious, yet achievable, 10 year strategy for improving the Nation's health by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Healthy People 2010 is committed to a single, overarching purpose: promoting health and preventing illness, disability and premature death.

Previous experience in facilitating a number of other statewide planning processes, such as Healthy Kansans 2000 and the RWJ Turning Points initiative, indicates that a planning project of this magnitude will require significant dedicated staff time. Existing staff in the Division of Health have first hand experience in designing and implementing statewide health planning processes and would be well positioned to oversee such a project. However, the extensive involvement of external partners, while crucial to the success of a statewide health planning initiative, is a labor intensive project which needs the full time attention of specified staff in order to be effective and timely. Other cost considerations include travel costs or per diem reimbursement for participants of the process. While experience has shown that most organizations will contribute this type of support, it is expected that some participants representing disparate groups would need reimbursement assistance in order to participate. The Healthy Kansans 2000 process involved more than 200 people from across the state; approximately 15 requested assistance for travel and per diem in order to participate in meetings. Because such a process is dependent upon active involvement of a broad base of people representing a wide spectrum of interests, it is essential to be inclusive in the planning process.

We commend the legislature for recognizing the importance of initiating a collaborative health planning process that embraces the Healthy People 2010 Objectives, as this will undoubtedly result in identification of health issues of common interest to participants and subsequently lead to opportunities for collective response to the greatest health threats we currently face. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee and will gladly stand for questions.