

**Testimony on HB 2634**  
**An Act Concerning West Nile Virus Testing**  
**By**  
**Roderick L. Bremby**  
**Secretary**  
**Kansas Department of Health and Environment**  
**To**  
**The House Health and Human Services Committee**

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My name is Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

HB 2634 requires the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE) laboratory to run a West Nile virus test whenever requested by a licensed physician.

Currently, this testing is performed by commercial laboratories for diagnostic purposes. The KDHE laboratory provides confirmatory testing, performs tests that are not readily available through commercial laboratories, or performs tests having results that could have important implications for public health. There are different types of tests that can be used for West Nile virus. Since West Nile virus is a relatively new disease, the accuracy, complexity, and cost of these tests vary considerably from test to test and from laboratory to laboratory.

The state laboratory can run an Enzyme Linked Immuno-absorption Assay (ELISA) a for West Nile virus, which is very accurate and validated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. KDHE used these tests in the past year to confirm the most severe cases of the disease. In addition, this test is suitable to confirm the results of other less accurate tests available at commercial laboratories, but requires a significant amount of both labor and time. Even though KDHE has no way to know how many West Nile Virus tests were performed by commercial labs in the past year, based upon an estimate of 1,000 to 1,500 tests which could potentially be sent to the KDHE lab if this bill passes, a total cost \$160,000 per year would be needed for staff to follow up with clinicians, perform lab tests, and purchase laboratory supplies necessary to carry out the tests. There are currently no State laboratory fees associated with this test.

It seems that this cost coupled with the fact that private laboratories are available to perform tests indicate there is not need for this legislation. The KDHE laboratory will continue to perform tests to confirm the most severe forms of the disease.

I will now stand for your questions.