

Written Testimony in Support of Kansas House Bill 2277

Submitted by Ngoc Vuong, 3210 West Graber Circle, Wichita KS

Dear Sen. Warren, Sen. Wilborn, Sen. Haley, Sen. Baumgardner, Sen. Bowers, Sen. Corson, Sen. Gossage, Sen. Pyle, and Sen. Thompson,

I am writing to you as a behavioral health policy researcher and a person who has loved ones with mental health and substance use issues.

In 2021, there were more than 100,000 drug overdoses nationwide. Provisional data from the National Center for Health Statistics indicates that reported drug overdose deaths in Kansas increased from 396 in June 2020 to 573 in June 2021. This is a 44.7% increase and the **third highest** in the country. Most drug overdose deaths both statewide and nationwide have been attributed to opioids such as fentanyl.

The Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee has the opportunity to facilitate implementing one of the simplest strategies that would allow for fentanyl contamination testing. **Kansas House Bill 2277** could be enacted into law. Lethal doses of fentanyl have been identified in a wide array of illicit and counterfeit drugs. Fentanyl test strips (FTS) could prevent opioid overdoses and save lives by better informing individuals who use drugs whether it contains fentanyl. Although fentanyl test strips are affordable, simple to use, and have empirical support, as it stands, FTS are considered drug paraphernalia under state law.

I can be reached via nxvuong1@outlook.com or (316) 516-3078 if you would like additional information on the strong empirical support for fentanyl test strips and other strategies that can prevent overdoses and save lives, increase access to care for people with substance use disorders, and reduce the stigma of mental health and substance use issues.

Ngoc Vuong