

Testimony before the House Health and Human Services Committee on House Bill 2417

February 21, 2005

Dear Chairman Morrison and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to speak in support of HB 2417, creating a Kansas Council on Obesity Prevention and Management. Specifically, duties of the Council shall include, but not be limited to the following:

*The collection and analysis of data regarding the extent to which children and adults in Kansas suffer from obesity, and the programs and services currently available to meet the needs of overweight children and adults, and the funds dedicated by the state to maintain such programs and services.*

*The collection and analysis of data to demonstrate the economic impact on the state of treating obesity-related diseases and the estimated cost savings of implementing a comprehensive statewide obesity prevention and management model. (Sec 2, part a-b)*

The function and additional duties of the Council, as well as the composition of the Council, are included in HB 2417.

In the report, *Healthy Kansans 2000*, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) recognized obesity among the known risk factors contributing to serious health consequences. The KDHE would oversee the Council. The diverse make-up of the Council would be an added and significant contribution as KDHE continues to monitor and collect data regarding the obesity epidemic.

Treating obesity as a disease goes beyond just losing weight. As a state, it is important to look at the big picture. If we focus on the big picture, which is to review thoroughly the effect of obesity in children and adults, we can save lives, preserve human dignity, and decrease the cost of health care. The Council would make Kansans more aware of obesity as a disease. A disease which can be treated, prevented, and managed. In addition to any legislative appropriations, the Council may accept and expend grants and private donations from any source, including federal, state, public and private entities.

I come before you today to ask that you pass HB 2417. I will be happy to stand for questions.

Sincerely,

Barbara W. Ballard  
Representative