



# K A N S A S

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Testimony on HB 2739  
To  
Committee on Health and Human Services  
By  
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Kansas Department of Health and Environment

February 20, 2006

Chairman Morrison and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Dr. Howard Rodenberg. I am the director of the Division of Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and State Health Officer. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in support of House Bill 2739 which proposes to prohibit the use of tobacco in a medical care facility or its property.

The toll of tobacco use on Kansas is devastating. Each year more than 3,900 Kansans die as a result of tobacco use due to heart disease, cancer, stroke, and lung disease. This is more than the death toll of AIDS, crack, heroin, cocaine, alcohol, car accidents, fire, and murder combined. In addition, it's estimated that up to 600 Kansans die each year from exposure to secondhand smoke. Tobacco costs the state of Kansas an estimated \$724 million in health care costs, of which \$180 million is attributed to Medicaid expenses, annually. Each household in Kansas bears the burden of an additional \$547 in taxes each year due to tobacco.

The negative impact of tobacco use upon patients in health care facilities is impossible to ignore. Cigarette smoking is linked to heart disease, cancer, stroke, and lung disease. Environmental tobacco smoke, or secondhand smoke, has also been proven to impact health. Secondhand smoke contains 4,000 substances, more than 40 of which are known to cause cancer. Smoke in the air is higher in tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide, and cancer-causing chemicals than smoke inhaled through a cigarette. Just as hospitals are required to provide a safe environment for all staff and patients within the facility, requiring all grounds to also be tobacco free will ensure a safe and clean environment for all who enter through the doors, without being subjected to secondhand tobacco smoke. It's important to note that tobacco-free hospital grounds policies do not only impact upon the long-term effects of secondhand smoke. They also enhance the acute management of conditions such as asthma and emphysema in sick patients within the emergency department or those admitted to the hospital. It makes good clinical sense for hospitals to have such a policy.

Hospitals are in an excellent leadership position in the community to serve as a role model for good health by not allowing tobacco use on buildings and grounds. Hospitals recognize the need for a well-defined and

enforceable tobacco products policy and as health-conscious professionals will embrace this opportunity to reduce the effects they see on a daily basis from tobacco use and secondhand smoke. Moreover, requiring

hospitals to provide healthy environments for the patients, guests, staff, and health care providers will set exemplary standard for workplaces in our State.

I applaud the vision of the Kansas Hospital Association in endorsing this bill, and your interest in protecting the health of Kansans. I urge you to support HB 2739, and I'll be happy to stand for any questions you might have.



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