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H.B. 2739 — Prohibiting Tobacco Use in Hospitals and on Hospital Grounds

February 20, 2006

Chairman Morrison and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Terri Roberts, R.N., and I am here representing the KANSAS STATE NURSES ASSOCIATION (KSNA). KSNA is the professional organization for Registered Nurses, representing the more than 28,000 RN's licensed in the state of Kansas.

We are very pleased that this committee is having a hearing on House Bill 2739. Secondhand smoke poses an unnecessary health risk forced upon those non-smokers who are in places where smoking is unrestricted and this bill proposes to eliminate tobacco use on Hospital Grounds, where Kansans seek "health care". This new law would be consistent with the mission of hospitals, to provide a healthy, safe, healing environment towards the attainment of maximum health.

KSNA in general supports a statewide public places smoking prohibition, so naturally the prohibition of tobacco use in and around hospitals, as one more step towards eliminating smoking in public places is considered a positive step towards that goal.

The Robert Wood Foundation has funded a national campaign to assist nurses in their efforts to quit smoking, the Tobacco Free Nurses Campaign. Kansas has two registered nurses on that steering committee, Dr. Cindy Hornberger, R.N., Dean of the Washburn University School of Nursing and myself. The project's goal is to assist all nurses in educating themselves about cessation techniques, and to support cessation among those addicted to tobacco products, including themselves. The project provides a confidential referral and Quit Line with all the resources and support in one location at www.tobaccofreenurses.org. Cindy and I have both shared information with our nurse executive colleagues throughout the state about this program and encouraged their support of nurses seeking to quit the past two years.

Passing this law will assist hospitals in their goals to promote healthy lifestyles among their staff and those whom they serve. We urge your favorable recommendation for passage.

Thank You.