

March 1, 2006

Jim Morrison, Chairman
Health and Human Service Committee
The Kansas State House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Morrison:

I am the Chief Nursing Officer of Wesley Medical Center in Wichita Kansas. My facility hires an average of 90 new professional nursing graduates per year and I am writing to support of House Bill 2813.

I first must admit that I had concerns about the impact of the bill on Wesley. As I've thought through the pros and cons, I support this bill for the following reasons:

Patient Safety: An unlicensed professional nursing graduate, while having graduated from a college of nursing, has not demonstrated the minimum competency required to pass the national licensure exam for Registered Nurses. The profession of nursing recognized this exam as the entrance into the profession. The complexity of patient care and the acuity of patients today requires employers to hire those nurses who demonstrate that competency.

Failure Rates: In May of 2005, WMC hired 47 new graduates. Forty one passed boards meaning 7 or 15% did not. These failures raise concerns regarding the safety/competency of the independent practice of graduate nurses.

Costs to the institution: Those 7 graduates who failed the exam went through an average 10 weeks orientation, were removed from their graduate nursing positions, and moved into support (non-registered nurse) positions if they accepted them. The cost to the institution equaled approximately:

Salary of the new graduate:	\$45,360
Salary of the preceptor	\$47,520
Selection tool	\$1050
Performance Based Development System	\$1050
Extra classes (ACLS, Critical thinking Monitor interpretation)	\$2,592
Lost opportunity of recruiting others	\$45,360
Total	\$142,932

This equaled approximately \$20,419 per graduate of unnecessary expense to my institution. As a nursing administrator I believe these

dollars could better be utilized in the recruitment, retention, and professional development of licensed nurses.

Employment: This bill does not preclude the new graduate from working but will stop healthcare facilities from placing the graduate nurse and patients in jeopardy. Our facility has developed a position called a transition tech that allows new graduates to practice appropriate skills but keeps them in a supervised role. If this bill passes, we will expand the position to the new graduate allowing them to work, have an income, but restrict them from practicing independently. You may be thinking if patient safety is critical why haven't facilities done this already? Wichita Kansas has a critical nursing shortage. We are faced with recruiting new graduates and paying them a competitive salary. If we offer the transition tech position at a lesser salary while others offer a new graduate salary, we stand to lose potential applicants. My facility must stay competitive.

I hope I have given you enough information in this testimony. I urge you and your committee to support this bill as it represents support for the safety of the citizens of Kansas.

Sincerely

Susan K. Ebertowski, MSN, MSHA, CHE, RN
Chief Nursing Officer