

**Testimony of Rachel Sweet (Written Only)**  
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**Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes**  
**Supporting SB 144**  
**Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee**  
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Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes, the advocacy and political arm of Planned Parenthood in Kansas, supports Senate Bill 144, which would allow for the use of expedited partner therapy to treat certain sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Planned Parenthood health centers in Kansas provide 3,000 tests and treatments for STDs annually. Planned Parenthood has a vested interest in ensuring Kansans are able to access the sexual and reproductive health care they need.

**Expedited Partner Therapy, or “EPT,” is an important tool in limiting the spread of certain sexually transmitted infections, and its use is supported by health and medical organizations.**

- Expedited partner therapy is the practice of treating the sexual partners of patients in whom STIs are diagnosed, helps to prevent the spread of STIs—specifically, gonorrhea and chlamydia—through prescriptions or medications given to patients’ partners.
- Sexually transmitted infections can hinder sexual health and even create a preventable threat to women’s fertility. Unfortunately, gonorrhea and chlamydia are very common in the United States, and have been on the rise in Kansas<sup>1</sup>.
- Medical associations, including the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists<sup>2</sup>, the American Medical Association<sup>3</sup>, the American Academy of Family Physicians<sup>4</sup>, and more, support the use of EPT to manage the spread of chlamydia and gonorrhea if a health care provider has determined that the patient’s partner is unlikely or unwilling to seek treatment within the context of a traditional patient-physician relationship. The CDC<sup>5</sup> also supports this practice, and has been recommending it since 2006.

**Making clear that EPT is legal in Kansas will provide the legal reassurance that health care providers need to implement EPT, if appropriate.**

- Uncertainty over EPT’s legality is a frequently mentioned and significant barrier to its use. Without clear laws, providers have shied away from implementing EPT, fearful that doing so could violate medical ethics or make them vulnerable to lawsuits<sup>6</sup>.
- Studies have shown that the use of EPT is significantly higher in states that have laws and policies than in areas with only supportive policies, but no clear laws<sup>7</sup>.
- States are increasingly making their laws clear that EPT is permissible. Kansas should join this trend. EPT is already permissible in the vast majority of states, including 43 states and the District of Columbia.

Making clear that the practice of EPT is legal in Kansas represents a tremendous opportunity to safeguard the health and well-being of Kansans across the state. We respectfully urge the committee to advance Senate Bill 144 favorably.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.kdheks.gov/sti\\_hiv/download/std\\_reports/Case\\_Rates\\_2007-2017.pdf](http://www.kdheks.gov/sti_hiv/download/std_reports/Case_Rates_2007-2017.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Gynecologic-Practice/Expedited-Partner-Therapy>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/ethics/expedited-partner-therapy>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/partner-therapy.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/std/ept/legal/EPT-toolkit-complete.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/02/s-t-d-care-for-two/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3927721/>