

February 15, 2021

Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee

Dear Chair Hilderbrand and Committee Members,

I am a Registered Nurse and am currently attending Wichita State University in the Family Nurse Practitioner program. I am writing to you in regard to SB 174. I support this bill, as it will ensure that when I graduate, I can practice to the fullest extent of my degree and training as a Nurse Practitioner.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical role Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) serve for patients across our state and the need to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to that care. Currently, Kansas is only meeting 50% of the primary care need and 43% of the mental health care need in health professional shortage areas.

My nursing background consists of work in the Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Room. Working on both of these units, I noticed the large volume of patients with poorly managed chronic diseases such as COPD, diabetes, kidney disease, and congestive heart failure. I decided to go back to school to receive a Doctor of Nursing degree in the Family Nurse Practitioner specialty. I hope that with this degree, I can work to alleviate the burden on our hospital system by providing quality preventative care and chronic disease management in the outpatient setting.

The removal of practice restrictions in other states has been shown to increase the number of licensed APRNs, allowing improved access to primary health care and mental health care services for Medicare, Medicaid, underserved and rural area patients. With full practice authority APRN's will practice within our education, training and certification. Professional collaboration with other healthcare professionals will continue to be a standard practice. The APRN scope of practice does not change with full practice authority. I urge you to pass HB 2256 so that I can practice to the full extent of my degree when I graduate.

Thank you for the hard work that you do every day representing Kansans in the state legislature. I am appreciative of your time and consideration on this topic.

Sincerely,

Abigail Koch, BSN, RN
1651 N. Hood St
Wichita, KS 67203