

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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BARB WASINGER
111TH DISTRICT

March 18, 2024

HB2834 Oral Proponent

Representative Barb Wasinger, District 111

Dear Chair Sutton and Committee members:

I am testifying in favor of **House Bill 2834** which would transfer the State Health Insurance Plan from the Department of Administration to its rightful place in the Department of Insurance.

My husband suffered from hip pain in 2020 and believed it to be his IT band. He got an MRI, did physical therapy, had chiropractic treatments, and did dry needling for pain relief but it persisted and got worse. He got an appointment with a Hays orthopedic physician in July 2021 to see if he could get relief from a cortisone shot. The doctor did x-rays and immediately told him shots would not help – his hip joint was bone on bone and needed to be replaced. A surgical date was set for July 30, 2021.

Two days before the surgery he was called and told that the State Employee Health Plan office denied the surgery and was told to do more physical therapy and get cortisone shots. Neither of which would be of any benefit or help.

I was able to call Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt to see if she could help me with the SEHP office in order to change their determination. They did and I was chastised by the SEHP office for going to the Commissioner for help. But the end result was my husband's surgery on July 30, 2021 that gave him tremendous relief.

I was able to get this done due to my ability to directly contact the Insurance Commissioner, but many Kansans cannot. I believe that moving the State Employee Health Plan from the Department of Administration to the Department of Insurance is a wise choice. The staff of the Insurance Department are more familiar with dealing with insurance issues like my husband's. It is logical to make the change and do the best for all State Employees by moving the SEHP to the Insurance Department.

I come today to ask you to pass HB 2834 favorably. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.