

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE
SENATE BILL 141
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Position: I support SB 141 as long as it is amended to (1) delete all of *New Section 1*; and (2) delete all of *Section 2 except subsection (d) lines 21-25* that adds "*a person licensed to practice podiatry*" to K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 65-1130.

Good afternoon, Honorable Senator Pilcher-Cook and members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee.

My name is Pamela Fruechting. I live in Wichita, KS. I've been a nurse practitioner for 18 years and spent the majority of my career in orthopedics, mainly joint replacement and general trauma.

I've worked alongside podiatrists for the better part of 15 years. I presently work with podiatrist Dr. Jon Morgan. I know firsthand the breadth and depth of their medical and surgical knowledge, expertise, skill, and positive outcomes. I've been in surgery with them, I've seen patients with them in clinic, and we've sat in each other's office to consult on patients. It will always be my preference to send my foot patients to a podiatrist for definitive care.

Regarding SB 141, the language in New Section 1 allows for the Board of Healing Arts to regulate nurse practitioners who are in a collaborative relationship with podiatrists. This is unnecessary and should be completely deleted because nurse practitioners and their collaborative relationships with physicians are regulated by the Kansas Board of Nursing and not by the Board of Healing Arts.

With the exception of Sections 2 (d) lines 21-25 of the bill that adds *a person licensed to practice podiatry* to K.S.A. 2014 Supp. 65-1130, the remainder of Section 2 is unnecessary and should be deleted, because it duplicates the Kansas Nurse Practice Act. Only the Board of Nursing should regulate nurse practitioners.

If SB 141 were so amended, yet retained the proposal to classify podiatrists as physicians, and to add podiatrists to the list of collaborative physicians in the Nurse Practice Act, it would open the door for nurse practitioners and podiatrists to work together directly.

As it is right now, I, as a nurse practitioner, cannot work directly with a podiatrist. This is because the Nurse Practice Act says that nurse practitioners may work only with physicians.

In order to work with Dr. Morgan in our orthopedic group, we had to create a work-around in which I have a written collaborative practice agreement with a second physician, an orthopedic surgeon whose education included foot/ankle surgery.

SB 141 opens the door to for podiatrists to form healthcare partnerships with nurse practitioners and opens the door to broader access to medical and surgical care of the foot and ankle in Kansas.

Thirty-eight states already recognize podiatrists as physicians. All our bordering states do -- Missouri, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. Podiatrists are physicians in every sense of the word -- physicians of the foot and ankle. I know firsthand of their excellent care and outcomes, and they do it well.

A YES vote to SB 141, with the amendment to remove all the APRN language, would be a *very smart step forward* for the healthcare of Kansas.

Thank you.