

Testimony Before the

House Health and Human Services Committee

By

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Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Wendy Funk Schrag and I am the Vice President for State Government Affairs for Fresenius Medical Care. I am here today to ask your support for **HB 2496, the Nurse Licensure Compact**. Fresenius Medical Care is a large dialysis organization, operating in every state except North Dakota. In Kansas, we provide dialysis services to over 1,200 people with kidney failure at 24 outpatient dialysis facilities. These individuals are a chronic and complex patient population with multiple conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, the leading causes of kidney failure, as well as congestive heart failure, cardiovascular disease, and others. They must undergo dialysis treatments at least three times each week, and even missing one treatment can be dangerous.

Our interest in the adoption of the Nurse Licensure Compact relates to two important matters: (1) seamless staffing of dialysis facilities during times of natural disasters and (2) use of specialized Registered Nurses to deliver supportive nursing services to our patients through telephonic case management services.

- (1) Severe weather, power outages, water contamination, or other disaster-related events may impair our ability to provide dialysis staff at a moment's notice when disasters occur. Our company is nationally known for providing excellent and timely disaster response, most recently in Texas and Puerto Rico due to the hurricanes and in California due to wildfires. Since dialysis is a complicated procedure that requires specialized nursing training, and with a small window of time in which to get the patients dialyzed, dialysis nurse staffing is critical. It is important that dialysis nurses from states that are part of the Nurse Licensure Compact can come to the aid of patients. Sometimes our staff are also impacted

by natural disasters and need to be allowed to stay home and care for their own needs. Having RNs who can quickly come from other states to fill in would be possible if Kansas joins the Nurse Licensure Compact. In addition, if Kansas nurses have multi-state licenses, they are also able to travel to assist in storm impacted areas.

- (2) The ability to provide specialized nursing care to patients remotely via telephone is critical to improving patient outcomes. Fresenius Medical Care currently employs over 200 RN Case Managers located in call centers throughout the United States. Some of the supports we provide include patient education, review of medications, and arrangements for transportation to dialysis to reduce emergency department visits and missed dialysis treatments. The administrative burden of obtaining multiple nursing licenses in non-Compact states has restricted our case management services to the states that are currently members of the Nurse Licensure Compact. Therefore, our dialysis patients in Kansas currently do not receive this important service.

For these reasons, we hope you will support the Nurse Licensure Compact. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about this issue, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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