

House of Representatives Health and Human Services Committee  
HB 2198 -Proponent  
February 14, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an Ob/Gyn practicing in the Kansas City and a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, or ACOG, and fully support House Bill 2198. This legislation enables physicians who have a patient with a common sexually transmitted illness to treat both their patient and the patient's partner. Similar legislation is already in place in 43 other states and is supported by the ACOG, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Medical Society. ACOG considers treatment of a patient's partner to be standard of care and recommends that it be practiced by all providers in order to reduce rates of sexually transmitted infections (Expedited Partner Therapy. ACOG Committee Opinion No. 737. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.)

As many of you know, the rates of sexually transmitted infections are rapidly rising across the country. According to the CDC, the rates of chlamydia have increased 22%, the rates of gonorrhea 67% and the rates of syphilis 78% since 2013 (<https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats17/default.htm>). In my practice, I have had several pregnant women who continued to test positive during their pregnancies despite appropriate treatment for chlamydia because they were being continually re-infected by their partner.

HB 2198 is budget neutral and it would provide legal protections for physicians like me to treat their patient's partners. Sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhea and chlamydia often carry serious consequences for women and their children including permanent infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease including the development of abscesses requiring hospitalization, neonatal injuries including blindness, pneumonia, deafness, bone and teeth malformations and skin disorders. Thankfully, gonorrhea and chlamydia are easily treated with inexpensive and safe medications. In many cases, diagnosis and treatment can be done in a single office visit and a prescription can be sent with the patient for treatment of her partner. Simplifying and encouraging expedited partner therapy is a simple and effective way of treating sexually transmitted illnesses in our communities and reducing the burden on our patients and the health care system as a whole. Please join me in supporting this bill and making our communities healthier for everyone.

Sincerely,  
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