

Testimony concerning SB 129
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Presented by Alexandra Blasi, Executive Secretary
On behalf of
The Kansas State Board of Pharmacy
February 17, 2021

Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas State Board of Pharmacy respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to SB 129, as written. Specifically, the Board has identified four concerns about the language in Section 2, subsection (d)(17), which would permit dental therapists to dispense and administer certain medications. The Board strongly encourages the Committee to consider amending the language in this section to ensure proper supervision, regulation, and oversight necessary to protect the public. Consumer safety should be carefully considered before granting authority to dispense or administer any medications to patients.

The bill allows dispensing and administration of the listed medications pursuant to a prescription from any licensed healthcare provider. The authority is not limited to prescriptions from licensed dentists. In effect, this would allow a dental therapist to send patients home with a prescription for antibiotics for a UTI, ear infection, or more serious infection if the patient had a prescription from any licensed healthcare provider. Additionally, there is no requirement to verify the prescription and no limitation on the number of days supply or quantity dispensed. Dental therapists would not have the requisite education, training or experience to dispense or administer medications to patients for these or other purposes. Moreover, the Board struggles to understand how or why it is not more appropriate for patients to have these prescriptions filled or dispensed at their local pharmacy. Pharmacies conduct careful medication reviews and provide necessary patient counseling not only for one prescribed medication, but for the patient's entire medication profile. In addition, pharmacists are required to review drug interactions and allergies, and properly label medications.

The Board understands the need to improve access to dental services and oral healthcare in Kansas and supports that goal. Unfortunately, the current text of Section 2, subsection (d)(17) is too far-reaching and appears much broader than the intended authority of the bill's intent. To ensure adequate protections are in place, the Board recommends limiting dispensing and administration to only medications prescribed by a licensed dentist. Furthermore, these privileges should be limited to oral health or dental needs. In Kansas, APRNs are not even allowed to dispense medications.

Having provided this testimony to the legislature in two previous sessions, the Board is perplexed as to why the bill's author has not considered adjusting the language of this section in the interest of public safety. The Board is hopeful that this Committee will consider limiting this language.

Respectfully submitted.