

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Morrison at 1:32 p.m. on January 21, 2004, in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except Representative McLeland, who was excused.

Committee staff present:

Dr. William Wolff, Legislative Research Department
Renaë Jefferies, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Gary Deeter, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Dr. Gianfranco Pezzino, State Epidemiologist, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Gary Haulmark, Market Intelligence Analyst/Government, Cerner Corporation
Jeff James, HealthSentry Engineering Manager, Cerner Corporation
Tiffany Wilkinson, Assistant Division Manager, Communicable Disease Prevention and Public Health Preparedness, Kansas City (Missouri) Health Department
Sally Finney, Executive Director, Kansas Public Health Association

Others attending:

See Attached List.

Representative Wilson recognized several of his constituents from Pittsburg.

For purposes of hearing **HB 2513**, Representatives Storm and Neighbor shared responsibilities for chairing the meeting. Chairperson Neighbor opened the hearing on **HB 2513**.

Dr. Gianfranco Pezzino, State Epidemiologist, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), reviewed electronic reporting systems, saying that a lack of standards has hindered most public health electronic systems. (Attachment 1) He noted that KDHE in 1999 developed one of the first web-based, secure reporting systems in the nation. Dubbed HAWK, the system allows local health departments to report diseases and other health information directly into a central database hosted by KDHE.

Regarding **HB 2513**, he said that HAWK presently does much that the bill proposes. While he supports most of the criteria and concepts promoted in the bill, he believes the bill is unnecessary.

Answering questions, Dr. Pezzino said he would vote against this bill. He noted that some facets of the bill would inhibit the flexibility of the agency in the future. He explained that HAWK can be accessed only by local health departments, although other health-care entities sometimes report information through their local health departments. He said that state law requires strict privacy regarding health information with the exception of child abuse, and encryption, firewalls and token passwords are used to protect the integrity of the information. He stated that a separate system collects general health information. He replied that HAWK is continually adding new features, such as electronic transfer of

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data, bypassing manual data entry. He reported that laboratory-confirmed diseases or unusual diseases are most thoroughly reported; some common diseases such as influenza are less likely to be 100%-reported. A member noted that implementation of **HB 2513** carries a fiscal note of \$300,000 (Attachment 6); Dr. Pezzino estimated that updating HAWK would cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Representative Sharp noted that KDHE was cited by Post Audit as vulnerable to computer attacks. Dr. Pezzino said those weaknesses have now been addressed, and the weaknesses did not involve HAWK. He noted that 11,000 records are added to HAWK each year. He said that statutory requirements allow health-care providers to report information either to the state agency or to their local health departments. Representative Sharp expressed concern that health-care information is being under-reported. Dr. Pezzino stated that, while most of the nine criteria are helpful, that the 7th criterion is unacceptable.

Gary Haulmark, Market Intelligence Analyst, Cerner Corporation, spoke in support of the bill, which, he said, would establish a near-real-time automated electronic disease-reporting system in Kansas. (Attachment 2) He cited the Kansas City (Missouri) Health Department data which show that, after implementing an electronic reporting system, the volume of data increased dramatically.

Jeff James, HealthSentry Engineering Manager, Cerner Corporation, outlined the development of a health-care-data reporting system in Kansas City, Missouri, and the State of Missouri. (Attachment 3) He said the system, by automating data collection, significantly reduces manual work; by developing a standardized nomenclature, a variously named disease is captured under one term, and all data are reported almost immediately.

Tiffany Wilkinson, Assistant Division Manager, Communicable Disease Prevention and Public Health Preparedness, Kansas City (Missouri) Health Department, provided some examples of how the Cerner system collects health-care and disease data and organizes it to be easily manipulated for various reports.

Sally Finney, Executive Director, Kansas Public Health Association, spoke as a proponent of the bill. (Attachment 4) She stated that the public health community supports the concept of reporting health-care data in a timely, secure and accurate manner, likewise expressing concern that the proposed legislation not hamper KDHE in their function as repository of health-care data.

The Chair reminded committee members of Attachment 5, written testimony by Robin Harrold, Chief Operating Officer of the Shawnee Mission Medical Center.

Further questions from members were fielded by conferees. Dr. Pezzino replied that HAWK is not doing all the items listed in **HB 2513**. He agreed that electronic reporting is the key element in expanding a reporting system, but expressed concern that Cerner's system as proprietary and exclusive may limit its usefulness.

The Chair closed the meeting after announcing that the hearing on **HB 2513** will continue tomorrow (Thursday) at 1:30 p.m.