

Testimony on House Bill 2034

Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care

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January 25, 2023

Chair Concannon and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for HB 2034. As proposed, HB 2034 amends K.S.A. 38-2202 and K.S.A. 38-2226 relating to procedures in investigations of child abuse or neglect; requiring a written referral from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to trained child abuse providers, who would in turn make recommendations on if a forensic examination (CARE exam) would be warranted; the development of a network of providers specifically trained in child abuse forensic exams (CARE network); the development of a program within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to house the CARE program, which would provide monitoring, data tracking, training and reimbursement to CARE providers for forensic examinations provided.

KDHE commends our partners in the establishment of a promising practice to address and investigate child abuse, and our Agency stands at the ready to continue in the implementation of the CARE program, following the 2022 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which allowed KDHE to begin creating the foundation for this program.

Our one concern is that adequate funding must be created for the implementation of this new program. KDHE has created a fiscal note, which reveals that the cost of program development, certification and training of CARE providers and direct reimbursement for CARE exams to providers would incur a cost of approximately \$765,000 annually. That is based on DCF data that around 600 child abuse reports would result in a CARE exam.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill and if there are further questions please contact Matt Lara, Director of Legislative Affairs (Matthew.Lara@ks.gov).