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Unity Is Strength

Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Chair Beverly Gossage

From: Con Olson, Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association

Testimony in Support of HB2579

The Kansas EMS Association (KEMSA) represents over 2,300 EMS professionals and 117 EMS agencies in Kansas; we represent agencies that are volunteer, privately owned and operated, hospital based, combined Fire and EMS or municipally run departments. As such, KEMSA understands the various types of services we represent as well as the many challenges our industry faces; including reimbursement for our services as well as the staffing challenges in our great state.

The COVID-19 Pandemic showcased the flexibility and evolution of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). As such, one area in which EMS falls short is the ability to distribute over the counter (OTC) medications as allowed by local Medical Direction as outlined in House Bill 2579. OTC medications can provide immediate relief for minor ailments or symptoms, such as pain, allergies, or gastrointestinal issues, without the need for a prescription or further medical intervention. Leaving these behind ensures patients have access to basic care even after the EMS team has left.

We would be remiss to state this bill would also allow EMS to leave opioid reversing drugs like Narcan behind at scenes where Opioid overdoses have been shown to occur. Opioid overdoses can be rapidly fatal, and quick administration of naloxone can reverse the effects of opioids, restoring normal breathing and

preventing death. Leaving Narcan behind enables bystanders or family members to intervene immediately if another overdose occurs before emergency services can respond again. While this may be controversial to some, the fact remains having the ability to do this will save lives.

Thank you for your time on this most important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Con Olson, Kansas EMS Association