

MARY PILCHER COOK

SENATOR, 10TH DISTRICT
STATEHOUSE, RM 221-E
TOPEKA, KS 66612
(785) 296-7362
800-432-3924
mary.pilchercook@senate.ks.gov



TOPEKA
SENATE

13910 W. 58TH PLACE
SHAWNEE, KS 66216
(913) 268-9306
mary@pilchercook.com

Testimony by Senator Mary Pilcher-Cook
House Health Committee – Stem Cell Treatment Educational Hearing
Monday, March 15, 2012

Today technology is moving very rapidly and the information age is moving us along at a very fast clip. Exciting opportunities are opening before us as new medical technologies become available. This will be an educational hearing, with several prominent physicians and a world-renowned scientist, focused on stem-cell treatments I believe will encourage and motivate us to develop a vision for Kansas to be at the center of stem-cell technology.

I have great interest in biological research because of the Huntington's Disease in my family. It is a genetic neuromuscular disease, with the symptoms of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Multiple Sclerosis all wrapped up in one bundle. Earlier generations were taught that this disease was never to be talked about in private, let alone in public. The suicide rate is extremely high for those diagnosed with the disease and my children's biological father committed suicide after his diagnosis. It is genetic. Each of my children has a 50-50 chance of having the gene, and the average age of onset is 35 years of age. My oldest daughter will be 36 this year. Do I want research? You better believe I want research – and I want the research that works, and I want it quickly.

Every family can speak to some terrible disease that has afflicted those they love dearly. Chances are you will hear about one of those diseases today. We are blessed to have these presenters with us today, as each one has a wealth of information to offer. Absorb what you can and let's think outside the box to figure out how we can bring this technology to Kansas without spending taxpayer dollars.