

Testimony of Anne Gray regarding SB160

I am Anne Gray, Administrator of Osage County Health Department, District 6 Delegate for Kansas Association of Local Health Departments, and a member of the East Central Kansas Public Health Coalition, our regional group of Administrators. The East Central Kansas Public Health Coalition has been working on projects to prepare for Accreditation sponsored by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kansas Health Institute, Kansas University School of Public Health and the National Association of City and County Health Officials for the last 6 years. We realize the importance and value of Accreditation and have worked very diligently to complete the projects. We believe Accreditation improves quality, accountability, continuity and policy development. We have worked on the local level in each of our counties to complete a Community Health Assessment, a Community Health Improvement Plan, and have done strategic planning on how to implement projects to improve the health of our county's communities.

In the world of service providers, I cannot think of one area that does not set standards of quality that must be met to perform the service. Plumbers, Restaurants, Hotels, Banks, Grocery Stores, electricians all have standards they must meet. In the medical world hospitals, doctor clinics, dentists, blood banks all are accredited. I ask you this: When choosing a doctor for a surgery would you chose one who was board certified or one that had no proof of certification. Would you go to a hospital that was not certified? Why single out Local Health Departments and not allow them to meet accreditation? We are proud of the hard work we have done to prepare for accreditation in our regional group, have been recognized on the national level for our work and anticipate being ready to apply in 2014. Our County Commissioners are supportive of our efforts and mine personally are cheering us on, pleased that our Health Department is voluntarily involved in the Accreditation process, bringing together our community members as partners in the quest to address and improve the health of our communities.

Enacting SB160 will not allow the local health departments to choose what Public Health can do to improve the health of our communities. The decision-making should remain at the local level, governed under the Board of County Commission for each county, as the Kansas Statutes state. For the health of our communities, please do not allow SB160 to go any further.

Anne Gray, Administrator

Osage County Health Department

Lyndon, KS 66451

785-828-3117

agray_ochd@earthlink.net