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Testimony

Date: February 12, 2018

To: The Honorable Vicki Schmidt, Chairperson
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

From: C. David Johnston, Past President Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association

RE: SB 311, Adding EMS personnel to list of mandatory reporters of abuse, neglect or exploitation of certain adults.

Madame Chairwoman and member of the Committee, my name is Dave Johnston. I proudly serve as the immediate past president of the Kansas Emergency Medical Association (KEMSA). I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 311 which would add EMS personnel to the list of mandatory reporters for the abuse, neglect or exploitation of certain adults.

Kansas EMS providers are often first-hand witnesses to incidences of neglect or abuse of patients in our communities. EMS providers do their best to provide quality care and root out the mistreatment of those who cannot protect themselves. We advocates for our patients by serving as the eyes and ears of our communities.

Kansas EMS currently has over 10,600 certified providers in the state with 4,500 of those providers working for permitted ambulance services. Kansas EMS services respond on average to 984 calls a day that is 359,155 per year. Each one of those responses is an opportunity to identify problems in the patient's own environment, whether that is their actual home or placed in the community. The mandated reporting of incidences has the potential to prevent further neglect or abuse in our communities.

EMS providers are already mandated reporters for the child abuse and neglect in Kansas. The addition of EMS into mandated reporting for adults would bring Kansas law in line with the surrounding states. This would also remove any liability concerns for EMS services that are already reporting issues. Concern have arisen that technically EMS services are releasing protected health information to entities not outlined by the law. SB 311 would provide a mandated reporting avenue to ensure the free exchange of information and ensure providers are advocating for their patients.

I respectfully ask for your support of SB 311.

C. David Johnston

Immediate Past President, Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association