



**House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice
In support of House Bill 2048
Testimony of Diana Schunn, Executive Director
Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County**

February 2, 2017

Chairman Jennings and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our support of HB 2048 regarding Erin's Law.

The Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County (CACSC) was founded on the belief that no single agency can serve and treat child abuse—a multidisciplinary team response is necessary. Schools are an integral part of this multidisciplinary team, as they spend time with these children on a regular basis and it is an optimal space where education on sexual abuse and body safety can occur. This additional education can easily be integrated into the topics already being provided, such as safety, appropriate/inappropriate conduct, relationships, and bullying.

Not unique to Kansas, Wichita/Sedgwick County promotes coordination of efforts, co-location of services, and immediate response protocols. Training and education is essential for all teachers to know how to properly react when a child discloses abuse or abuse is suspected. Our agency served 1,935 child victims of abuse in 2016 where 68% experienced sexual abuse. Of the 1,935 children 33% were ages 7-12 years and 33% were ages 0-6. Clearly abuse is occurring to children grades kindergarten through six and education plays a significant role during this critical time frame. Many agencies that already provide child abuse education to school age children do so free of charge. Collaboration between schools and nonprofit agencies will enhance prevention and intervention efforts available to children.

The passing of this legislation will bring awareness to how and when these cases are handled locally and across the state and assist to ensure that victims are protected in the best way possible. Ensuring that victims receive appropriate and effective education is essential to their safety and moving forward to a life free from violence.

Having been in healthcare and forensic nursing for over 20 years and spending the past nine with the Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County, I have had the opportunity to assist in coordination of services for victims of sexual abuse. This bill moves us in the right direction of protection through education for children. Again, I support and encourage movement forward with this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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