

Health and Human Services Committee  
March 14, 2018

Neutral SB 312 – written only

Chairman Hawkins and Committee Members

Kansas Health Care Association and Kansas Center for Assisted Living, (KHCA/KCAL), is a trade association with a membership of nursing homes, assisted living, residential health care, and home plus facilities. We are the oldest nursing home trade association in Kansas. Our membership provides care to 20,000 elders across the state each day.

Oral health has been a very important mission for KHCA/KCAL and we know optimum oral health care improves the overall quality of our residents' health and well-being.

Today I would like to submit testimony from our oral health consultant, Loretta Seidl, RDH, MHS, who has worked with the association since 2007. Her testimony is as follows:

My name is Loretta Seidl. I am a Registered Dental Hygienist with an Extended Care Permit. I'd like to share with you today some experiences I've had over the past 25-years while providing in-service presentations and oral care staff trainings in long-term care facilities in Kansas. There are many situations where residents have a variety of oral health problems that need to be addressed immediately. However, they may not be able to obtain the proper treatment because there is not a dentist available in the area, or the residents are not able to travel out of the facility due to physical or cognitive impairment.

In order for the Dental Therapist to provide proper and immediate oral care, we propose to return the original supervising agreement language in SB 308.

## **1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPERVISING AGREEMENT:**

*A supervising agreement entered into with a dental therapist must include specific written protocols detailing the scope of practice that the supervising dentist authorizes the dental therapist to perform and the required level of supervision, and outlining a course of action when the dental therapist encounters a patient who requires treatment that exceeds the dental therapist's authorized scope of practice. The supervising dentist must ensure that a dentist is available, in person or through distance technology, to the dental therapist for timely consultation if needed.*

### **Why should we keep this agreement?**

Since most long term care residents have many chronic health issues, it is important for the supervising dentist to review the overall health of the resident as well as the immediate oral health issue. This would be accomplished by outlining a course of action, especially if some antibiotic needs to be prescribed. If the Dental Therapist is unable to perform a certain procedure, and the resident is in pain or unable to eat, the dentist needs to make sure the resident has timely follow-up either in person or via distance technology. If the problem is not taken care of as soon as possible and the resident is unable to eat, the resident will continue to experience pain and weight loss.

## **2. EXTRACTIONS:**

*"nonsurgical extractions of periodontally diseased permanent teeth with tooth mobility of +3 or +4. The dental therapist shall not extract a tooth for any patient if the tooth is unerupted, impacted or needs to be sectioned for removal;"*

### **Why should we keep this agreement?**

As stated above, the resident may not be able to receive immediate oral care due to extenuating circumstances. If the dental therapist is allowed to provide extractions on teeth that have Class #3 or Class #4 mobility, this would alleviate the pain the resident is experiencing. With this extensive mobility, the resident is most likely not able to eat on that side of the mouth due to the pain when they chew. Therefore, the resident may lose weight due to lack of proper nutrition.

I have also experienced situations with residents who have actually extracted their own teeth due to mobility, pain and not being able to chew. When a tooth or partial tooth is mobile, the resident is at risk of aspirating the tooth.

In addition to the Dental Therapist providing the needed extraction in the facility versus a dental office, the Dental Therapist will be alleviating the immediate pain. This will also allow the resident to have treatment without the need of traveling a great distance. And many times, as you can see from the submitted testimonies, a resident may be taken to a dentist with pain, only to discover that the dentist is not comfortable treating them. This is often because of the resident's chronic conditions. Therefore, the dentist will then refer the resident to a hospital for treatment. Keep in mind, in many areas of Kansas, residents must travel 3 or more hours to get to an oral surgeon or hospital. For these reasons, we feel we should return to the original language about extractions in SB 308. Thank you.

# Debbie's Story



**Abscess Draining**



**Bone Loss**

My name is Debra Buehler. I am 64 yrs. old and live at the Shepherd's Center Nursing Home in Cimarron, KS. I have all of my own teeth and I take great care of them by brushing two & sometimes three times a day. Last year I developed pain to the lower right side of my mouth. The dentist was able to do a filling on one tooth but said I needed the tooth next to it removed and that the nearest place to us that would do the extraction was in Kansas City. This is approx. 7-8 hrs. one-way from Cimarron so it was just not feasible for me to go. I suffered with this pain for over 6 mo. while the nursing home searched for someone closer to us to help me. I was on antibiotics several times due to the infection. It was miserable.



It made me feel worthless, like I was not worth the time and effort for anyone to fix my teeth just because I am elderly and live in a nursing home. The staff tried but kept getting the same answer. No dentist would even look at me.

Finally, the dental team talked with our dental hygienist, Letty, and she helped us find a dentist who was 3 hours away. With her assistance we were able to contact Dr. Jerry Howell in Wichita who was willing to see me and do this extraction. Our administrator, Jean took me and we went to visit Dr. Howell. 20 min. was all it took. It was an enormous relief. The pain was gone! I could once again eat and talk without the pain. I was so happy.

It makes me sad to know that the dentists locally are so uncaring. It was a simple extraction but because I am elderly they seem to think that my teeth are less important, that my pain doesn't matter. I thank God that Letty and Jean were able to get me to Wichita and a

dentist who cares. Now I have no pain, no swollen jaw and no problem tooth.



## The Shepherd's Center

706 N. Main, PO Box 249, Cimarron, Ks. 67835-0249 - 620-855-3498

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jean Bryant and I am the administrator at The Shepherd's Center in Cimarron, Kansas. I have been the administrator at The Shepherd's Center for 20 years. Cimarron is a small community of approximately two thousand people in rural western Kansas. The Shepherd's Center is a small 28 bed long term care nursing home that provides intermediate care to the frail elderly in Gray County.

Adequate oral health care for the frail elders that reside at our home has been a very difficult challenge for the entire twenty years that I have been here. We were fortunate to be introduced to the OHTP training program approximately 10 years ago. Through this program we had an Oral Hygienist come to our home and develop a dental team consisting of both licensed staff and CNA's. She provided training to the team with education to assess and document the oral health of our elders. The Hygienist provides education to the entire staff on how to perform proper oral care for our elders. Thus, our elders do receive a better level of oral care. The Dental Hygienist visits quarterly to review, assist, educate, and support our dental team.

Our difficulty arises when we attempt to get the dental needs met from area dentists. There are some of the elders that have a difficult time transporting to a dentist. Many of the dentists will not take Medicaid patients and the elders do not have the resources to pay. Therefore, our elders have suffered. Needless to say, we have had some positive experiences. One of our elders (with Huntington's disease) needed to have her remaining teeth extracted due to very decayed and damaged teeth. We located a kind dentist 90 miles away that would do the extractions and accept Medicaid. It was a physical strain on the elder and the home. Another younger resident had a broken tooth that continued to be infected and we were unable to find a nearby dentist to care for her. Again, we were able to find a generous dentist 160 miles away willing to help us, and the home paid all of the expenses along with the fee to the dentist.

We have others that are in need of better dental services but are unable to receive the care due to the lack of dentists willing and able to care for our elders.

Our elders deserve and need better dental care than they are presently receiving. The services are just not available for them.

Respectfully,

Jean Bryant, RN  
The Shepherd's Center  
Kansas 67835

Administrator  
Cimarron,



## The Shepherd's Center

706 N. Main, PO Box 249, Cimarron, Ks. 67835-0249 - 620-855-3498

My name is Nanci Lacy. I'm the CNA/RA at The Shepherd's Center in Cimarron, KS. I have worked here for almost 5 years and I have been on the Dental Team for 4 of those years. OHTP in our home consists of 4 or 5 of the staff and our function is to make sure our Elders are receiving good dental care and to recognize when there may be an issue in their mouth. We are trained to help train the other staff on how to clean teeth or dentures, how to watch for signs of dental issues and what to do when they suspect something is wrong or an Elder tells them they are having tooth/mouth pain. We make sure all the Elders have any dental products they need.

Quarterly, at the Care Plan Meeting, we look in the Elders mouth to make sure they are not having any issues. We also make sure that when there is an issue, we get them in to see the dentist in a timely manner. We track what the issue is, who goes, who they go to, what the results were and then we also watch them to make sure the issue is resolved. I enjoy being on the Dental Team and am very proud to say we have even caught tongue cancer while it was still treatable in one of our Elders.

Our biggest problem is in finding good dental providers for our residents. There had been times we have had to go 150+ miles from here just to get the dental service they need. I wish there were more providers that care about our elderly dental issues. I am very glad that thru the OHTP training I have received I have been able to help with our Elders dental needs.

Sincerely,

Nanci Lacy CNA/RA

The Shepherd's Center

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