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Oral Testimony

Date: February 6, 2019

To: The Honorable Steven Johnson, Chairman
House Committee on Pensions, Investments and Benefits

From: David Johnston, President Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association (KEMSA)

RE: HB 2031, Amend definitions of “service-connected” in the Kansas police and fireman’s retirement system

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2031, My name is Dave Johnston, I am the President of the Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association (KEMSA). I am proud to represent many of the Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics serving in your communities.

On a regular basis EMS Providers respond to emergencies where they encounter hazardous scenes that have lasting effects on their health. One of the greatest risks for EMS providers is exposure to blood borne and infectious diseases. EMS providers are regular exposed to blood while rendering care to severely injured patients. Providers follow may procedural process to minimize their exposure to pathogens, but unfortunately exposures do occur. This bill would provide additional coverage in those unfortunate situations.

Please consider the following amendments to the bill:

Page 1, Line 16 – specifically list “emergency medical services provider” as being covered by this proposed legislation.

Page 4, Line 17 - Add a subsection (e) that would better define when a member “knew or reasonably should have known of the exposure.” Please consider the definition include the following: “Reasonable knowledge would include knowledge of obvious exposure to bodily fluids or persons who carry a disease. Reasonable knowledge may also include symptoms developed by the employee that can reasonably be linked back to a particular incident that is work related.”

Page 3, Line 13 - Provide a definition or direct to a statute or rule that includes all forms of hepatitis. As an example, Regulation 28-1-2, subsection (c) does provide a comprehensive list that is maintained by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dave Johnston, KEMSA President