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3 February, 2020

Honorable Chairperson
House Rural Revitalization Committee
Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 2527

Dear Honorable Chairperson:

I am writing in to give my full support for House Bill 2527. I am the current Chair for the Southeast Kansas Rural Trauma Council. I have functioned as the Chair for the last several years and Vice Chair and executive member over the last 10 years. I am active in my community as the Medical Director for Ascension Via Christi Emergency Department in Pittsburg and Fort Scott, KS and serve as the Administrator and Medical Director for Crawford County EMS. I am a member of the Medical Advisory Council for the Kansas Board of EMS.

House Bill 2527 effectively address the single greatest impediment to Emergency Medical Services peer review and performance improvement processes at the regional and state level by removing the sunset clause (K.S.A. 75-5664 and 75-5665) that has plagued regional performance improvement for many years. For the last several years, the Southeast Kansas Regional Trauma Council has tried to establish a regional peer review and performance improvement project for performance improvement in care of trauma victims. We have encountered significant resistance to the project due to concerns of protection from liability in discussing these cases due to uncertainty related to the sunset clause and ongoing peer review protection granted in K.S.A. 65-4915. EMS services were reluctant to start a program and allocate resources and time to a program that may or may not be protected or viable due to sunseting.

Peer review is a cornerstone to performance improvement in hospital and EMS systems. Peer review allows for discussion and implementation of measures to improve outcomes related to patient care. Regional peer review is especially important in the rural communities where EMS services cover much greater territory and patient movement is over greater distances and often well outside of their primary coverage area for transport of critical patients. Regional peer review allows for learning and performance improvement to affect multiple services at once instead of just one at a time, improving resource allocation, decreasing cost and time to implementation and improves patient outcomes.

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Again, I want to express my full support and respectfully request and urge acceptance and passage of House Bill 2527 to improve care of patients throughout Kansas, and especially in the rural communities. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further questions or concerns at email or phone number listed above.

Sincerely,

Timothy D. Stebbins, MD, FACEP