



TOBACCO FREE KANSAS COALITION

February 10, 2021

Rep. Steven Johnson, Chairman
House Insurance & Pensions Committee
RE: Support for HB 2129 – Tobacco Cessation Coverage

To the Members of the Insurance and Pensions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Sara Prem, and I am here today in my role as the president of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition. TFKC supports HB 2129, a bill that will provide state employees and their families with a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit.

The Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition is statewide alliance with nearly 300 members representing public health departments, education, health coalitions and advocates, youth, parents and individuals advocating for laws, policies and funding of proven programs to significantly reduce tobacco use and addiction, especially among children and high-risk populations.

TFKC believes everyone should have access to a comprehensive, barrier free tobacco cessation benefit such as what HB 2129 will provide. Our stance is supported by the 2020 Surgeon General Report on Smoking Cessation, which finds that insurance coverage for smoking cessation that is comprehensive, barrier-free and widely promoted increases the use of the treatment services, leads to higher rates of successful quitting and is cost-effective. In short, it saves lives and money.

- HB 2129 provides enrollees in the state health care benefits program access to all seven FDA-approved cessation medications and all three types of counseling – individual, group and phone.
- It permits combination pharmacotherapy and covers at least four 90-day medication-supported tobacco cessation attempts per year.
- It also ensures that there can be no lifetime limits, prior authorization and cost-sharing for all the benefits highlighted and no annual limits on counseling.

Finally, quitting smoking is the single best thing a person can do for their health and nearly seven out of ten smokers want to quit.¹ Quitting also is very difficult. We know that people who smoke may take 30 or more quit attempts on average before successfully quitting.² The provisions in HB 2129 take into account that quitting tobacco is difficult and that the process is different for everyone.

TFKC strongly supports HB 2129. It will help smokers who are state employees and their families quit, improve their health and help the state save money by preventing smoking caused morbidities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Sara Prem
President
Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

¹ Babb S, Malarcher A, Schauer G, Asman K, Jamal A. Quitting Smoking Among Adults — United States, 2000–2015. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2017;65:14571464. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6552a1external icon>

² Chaiton M, Diemert L, Cohen JE, et al. Estimating the number of quit attempts it takes to quit smoking successfully in a longitudinal cohort of smokers. *BMJ Open* 2016;6; e011045. Doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2016-011045.