



February 18, 2021

Kansas Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
RE: Senate Bill 174

Dear Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity (AFP) Kansas, I am here to testify in support of SB 174. AFP activists engage friends and neighbors on key issues and advocate for building a patient-centered health care system that lowers costs, increase choices, and improves access for millions of people seeking relief. The reforms outlined in the bill to expand access to telehealth would promote all these important goals.

Over the past several months, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) have played an important role helping hospitals and other facilities control the spread of COVID-19, largely thanks to emergency reforms implemented by Kansas' Governor and state legislature. In March, Gov. Kelly issued an executive order that suspended burdensome regulations that APRNs practice under a supervisory agreement with a physician.ⁱ Subsequently, the legislature enacted legislation extending these reforms into early 2021.ⁱⁱ

These temporary measures empowered APRNs to utilize the full extent of their education and training to deliver life-saving care to patients with COVID-19. As a result of these changes, Kansas decreased the daily number of COVID-19 deaths by eight percent.ⁱⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, this dramatic expansion of care is dependent on temporary reforms that expired at the end of January. Absent additional action from lawmakers, patients will lose access to the essential services and support APRNs provide when the emergency declaration ends.

This bill would ensure Kansas' nurse can continue to deliver high-quality care long after this pandemic ends. This proposal would permanently authorize APRNs to autonomously practice without working under a costly and burdensome supervisory agreement.

Removing these barriers will empower these highly qualified providers to continue to support patients and facilities in underserved areas. Studies show the number of NPs serving primary care shortage areas increase 30 percent when states provided nurses full practice authority.^{iv}

Furthermore, expanding access to APRNs will help lower the high cost of medical care. In 2014, analysis from the National Bureau of Economic Research found patients spend 15 percent less for pediatric checkups in states that expand the practice capabilities of NPs compared to more restrictive states.^v More recently, a 2019 study in the Journal of Nursing Regulations showed families spend 17 percent less on outpatient care and 11 percent less on prescription drugs in full

practice authority states.^{vi}

This committee can ensure more families receive the high quality and affordable health care they need by empowering APRNs with full practice authority. Please vote “Yes” on this in committee to strengthen health care access, lower costs, and end Kansas’ COVID-19 pandemic.

We thank you for the opportunity to address this critical issue and we look forward to working with the committee to craft real reforms that expand access to affordable and high-quality health care for all Kansans.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Patton

State Director

Americans for Prosperity

ⁱ <https://governor.kansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/EO-20-26-Executed.pdf>

ⁱⁱ http://www.kslegislature.org/li_2020s/b2020s/measures/hb2016/

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://publish.illinois.edu/projectformiddleclassrenewal/files/2020/08/The-Impact-of-Relaxing-Nurse-Practitioner-Licensing.pdf>

^{iv} [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(17\)30176-X/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(17)30176-X/fulltext)

^v <https://canpweb.org/canp/assets/File/Bay%20Area%20Council%20Report%204-30-14/BAC%20NP%20Full%20Report%204-30-14.pdf>

^{vi} [https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256\(19\)30078-X/fulltext](https://www.journalofnursingregulation.com/article/S2155-8256(19)30078-X/fulltext)