TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
2/17/04

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Doug Bowman, and I serve as staff to the Kansas Coordinating Council on Early Childhood Developmental Services. Our mission is to advise on matters pertaining to children with (or at risk of) developmental delay/disabilities.

HB 2350 was introduced by Representative Ethel Peterson, at our request.   This bill will enable the Secretary of Health and Environment to review the data base created from birth certificates on a routine basis. Parents (or guardians) of newborns whose birthweight was below 1200 grams or who had low APGAR scores will receive a single letter. The letter will simply inform them that their child's condition has been shown to sometimes correspond with later developmental delays. If they choose to investigate further, free evaluations are available in their own community. There will be no subsequent phone calls or contacts of any kind, unless the family requests it.

Our intent is to inform parents of free services for which they might qualify. These intervention services are voluntary, and quite user-friendly. More importantly, these services have proven to prevent later complications in the lives of young children.

Our system of early intervention providers have done a tremendous job with limited resources of identifying yong children who are in need of assistance. Babies who end up in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) are routinely referred. This bill will help us with those children who may have experienced a troubling delivery, and who may not be aware of possible ramifications.

Just last week I spoke with a mother who had to ask to see the medical records in order to find out that her baby had been resuscitated in the delivery room.   She told me that if anyone had told her, she might have been more vigilant when her child missed later developmental milestones.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I will gladly stand for questions.