

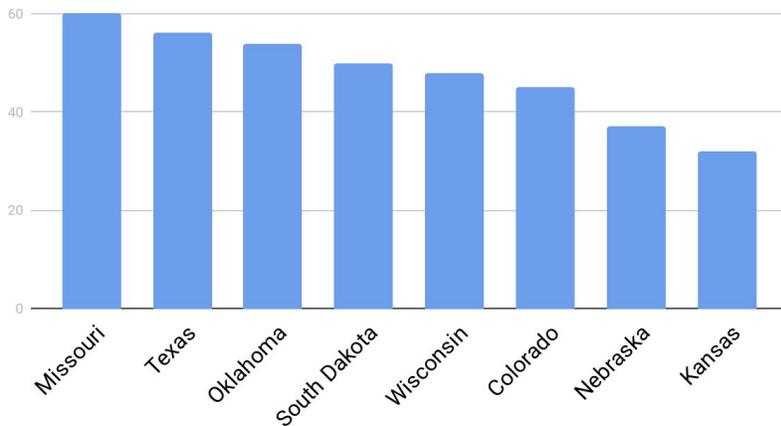
Oral Testimony before the:
Committee on Public Health and Welfare
 Melinda Lavon, Board of Directors, Health Advocate
 Kansas Midwives Alliance
 February 24th 2020 9:30am Room 118-N

Support for SENATE BILL #364

Thank you Chair Suellentrop and Public Health and Welfare committee members for today’s hearing. My name is Melinda Lavon and I serve on the board for the Kansas Midwives Alliance (KMA). The KMA is the organization that supports Kansas Midwives, including Certified Nurse Midwives, Certified Professional Midwives, and traditional community midwives. Midwives do perform newborn metabolic, hearing, and cardiac defect tests as part of their services.

Collaborative efforts among midwives and KDHE have increased the number of babies born out of hospital (OOH) who receive hearing screenings from 20% to 77% in just a few years. But equipment, equipment maintenance, and provider training takes *resources*. And this population is important because the number of OOH births in Kansas have more than doubled in the last 10 years and continue to trend upwards. The number of OOH newborns receiving metabolic tests have also increased through joint efforts between KDHE and midwives.

Number of Tests Offered by State



Metabolic Tests Other states on our borders and nearby are offering far more tests than we offer here in Kansas, including states with 1/3 the population of ours (SD). States with political leanings similar to ours (WI) also offer more tests than KS.

KS is 1 of 4 states or areas to not charge the family a fee for the test (\$38-\$137 range for states in bar graph), it’s noted that the other 3 states who do **not** charge a fee (NY, DC, PA) also offer more tests than KS. In states with a fee, most laws mandate that the fee charged

for the test go into the treatment funds, not directly to the state lab. When Missouri implemented or later raised their fees, testing rates decreased. For these reasons, midwives agree with the Kansas Hospital Association that no fee should be implemented.

Newborn Hearing Screening *lowest* cost to families private pay/out of pocket prices found:

Area Hospitals NE KS	Area ENT offices	Homebirth Midwives
\$230	\$180	\$25

Costs can already be a factor (especially for our un- and under-insured Kansas Residents) in the decision to not obtain the newborn screening tests, thus any increase at this time could further erode progress in ensuring every baby has access to these procedures.

If you've never personally toured the KDHE labs, I encourage you to do so. I'm a classically trained mass spectrometrist. Mass Spectrometers are some of the most expensive and sensitive analytical instrumentation that exists, and these instruments are necessary to run the metabolic screenings. I'm not sure how KDHE staff keep everything going in their small facility, but it's a testament to everyone's commitment to public health.

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