



Written testimony from
Barbara F. Atkinson, MD
Executive Vice Chancellor, University of Kansas Medical Center
Executive Dean, University of Kansas School of Medicine
before the
Senate Judiciary Committee
March 7th, 2011

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is in support of HB 2029, which would amend the definition of Charitable Health Care Providers under the Kansas Tort Claims Act (K.S.A. 75-6102(e)) to include ultrasound technologists. The Charitable Health Care Provider program allows health care providers who provide volunteer health care services to the medically indigent to be included for liability purposes under the Kansas Tort Claims Act. Currently, ultrasound technologists are not included.

Our students at the University of Kansas Medical Center operate two charitable care clinics in Kansas City and one in Wichita that would benefit from passage of HB 2029 and expanded tort protections for ultrasound technologists.

JayDoc Free Clinic, which operates in Kansas City, is a student-run safety net clinic that provides preventive and non-urgent medical care, including prenatal care, to the uninsured of the Kansas City metropolitan area at no cost to the patients. JayDoc Free Clinic operates general clinics two nights a week, staffed by more than two dozen volunteers, including physicians, medical students, allied health students, interpreters and community volunteers. Like other safety net clinics, JayDoc patients may be referred to other area medical providers or JayDoc-operated specialty clinics for continued care.

Unlike other safety clinics, however, JayDoc is unique in that it is entirely governed by a board of KU medical students. Students also provide patient care, under the supervision of volunteer faculty physicians. Last spring, JayDoc began offering limited, monthly radiology services to qualified patients and hope to expand this capability by offering on-site ultrasound diagnostic imaging as needed to improve their acute care services.

Also unlike other clinics, JayDoc does not screen patients for ability to pay. All care provided by the clinic is free to every patient. JayDoc, which is funded entirely by donations and local grants, is the only completely free clinic in the Kansas City area.

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Each year, more than 2,000 people (mostly residents of Wyandotte County) depend on the medical care they receive from JayDoc volunteer physicians and students, while our students receive valuable hands-on training in their medical disciplines.

KU medical students in Wichita operate a similar clinic, the JayDoc Community Clinic, which offers free care every Saturday to more than 500 patients each year. KU Health Partners also provides care to the uninsured and underinsured through Silver City Health Center in Kansas City. We believe that extending protections to ultrasound technologists providing charitable care through HB 2029 could help our clinics and students better meet the needs of more patients.

The Kansas tort claims act helped to ensure that many health care providers could continue to provide charitable care, and we believe that expanding the same protections to ultrasound technologists will ensure that more Kansans have access to high-quality health care. We urge you to pass HB 2029 favorably and without amendment.

Sincerely,



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