



**TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE
ON SB 160**

FEBRUARY 18, 2013

Chairperson Pilcher-Cook and members of the Committee:

The Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) is opposed to SB 160, a bill that prohibits local health departments from seeking accreditation.

Accreditation is simply recognition that an organization has met a set of standards. Hospital accreditation is a well-known example in the realm of health, but accreditation processes exist for a wide variety of organizations and fields of service. While the concept is relatively new to public health, the value in accreditation, and what it conveys to residents, professionals, and potential job creators, is well established.

The KAC fails to see any value in prohibiting accreditation. The accreditation standards of interest to local health departments are national in scope and entirely voluntary. No local health department is required to obtain accreditation, seek accreditation, or even consider the notion.

As noted above, having accreditation may be of interest to some counties because such a designation may help in attracting new businesses or residents. A similar motivation may also be at play in terms of grant funding. Local health departments often receive and seek grant funding, from statewide granters like the Kansas Health Foundation to national granters like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. If these entities decide that some, or all, of their grants must go to departments that are accredited, SB 160 would effectively ban the ability of Kansas local health departments to seek those funds. Pressure would rise to either reduce local services or to turn to other revenue streams, such as the local property tax.

In summary, the KAC urges you to reject SB 160. It prohibits local health departments from participating in a voluntary activity that offers economic value to the counties, and could have a direct impact on their funding options in the long-term.

Randall Allen
Executive Director