

Senate Committee on Education
Testimony on SB 389

Delwyn Catley, Ph.D., Professor of Pediatrics, Children's Mercy Kansas City

February 15, 2018

Chairperson Baumgardner and members of the committee:

This testimony is offered in support of SB 389, which would change requirements to administer certain tests, questionnaires, surveys and examinations under the student data privacy act and allow disclosure of de-identified student data. Adoption of Senate Bill 389 can facilitate important policy research affecting children's health such as assessing the impact of "Tobacco 21" policy on tobacco acquisition and use among youth. The results will provide valuable information to further tobacco control and prevention policy efforts locally, as well as across the state.

Evaluation of Tobacco 21 (T21) Policy:

Children's Mercy Kansas City and The University of Kansas are evaluating the impact of raising the age for purchasing tobacco products from 18 to 21 years old (Tobacco 21) on youth tobacco use. The study is supported by The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City to inform public policy locally, regionally and nationally following recent policy changes by many cities in Kansas. The study will compare smoking prevalence and access to tobacco between students at demographically comparable schools that are in and outside of Tobacco 21 communities.

The study is using data from the Kansas Communities That Care (KCTC) Student Survey to measure youth tobacco use, attitudes, and awareness of the Tobacco 21 policy. This annual survey provides school district and school building level data that is needed for the rigorous requirements of our study. The longitudinal nature of the survey allows us to compare data between communities over time.

The success of our study is critically dependent on the response rate to the survey. The data needs to be adequately representative of students in a given community and include a sufficient number of highly responsive school districts in order to be able to appropriately match demographically similar districts that are in and out of Tobacco 21 communities. Unfortunately, subsequent to the requirements of written opt-in parent consent that was required in 2014, the response rate is much lower than in prior years making longitudinal research and retention of responsive matched comparison schools a great challenge.

Adoption of Senate Bill 389 will increase survey participation to levels similar to those demonstrated in 2014. Increased participation will bolster results of the current study to evaluate the impact of new legislation and will help retain school participation for the length of the three-year study. It will also bolster the success of future studies of behavioral health of our Kansas youth.

I respectfully request your support for the ability to guide, assess and evaluate policy change in Kansas by passing Senate Bill 389. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at: dcatley@cmh.edu; (816) 302-0232.

The overarching aim of the study is to assess the impact of Tobacco 21 in Kansas by conducting an annual survey of:

- tobacco use,
- attitudes and awareness of the Tobacco 21 initiative,
- perception of tobacco harmfulness, and
- sources of nicotine/tobacco product acquisition

in targeted high school and middle school students that are within and outside of cities with Tobacco 21 policies.