



**TOBACCO FREE KANSAS
COALITION**

Testimony in Support of SB 316

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

Tara Nolen, President

February 8, 2018

Chairwoman Schmidt and Committee Members:

The mission of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition (TFKC) is to eliminate tobacco use in Kansas. To achieve that mission we have identified these core goals:

- To help those who want to quit using tobacco products.
- To protect Kansans from exposure to secondhand smoke.
- To protect and assist those populations disparately impacted by tobacco use.

There could be progress with all these goals with the adoption of SB 316, which removes barriers to tobacco cessation treatment for the Medicaid population. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death, taking the lives of 4,400 Kansans each year.

While we have made great strides in reducing tobacco use in Kansas, those below the poverty line bear a disproportionate share of the burden through use rates that are double the statewide average. This population is more likely to experience poor health outcomes, less likely to have access to care and more likely to be targeted through marketing by big tobacco.

We know what works when it comes to cessation. Providing counseling and access to pharmacotherapy provides the greatest chance for success, improving the lives of our poor and reducing health care costs for taxpayers, a win-win for Kansans.

I respectfully ask that you approve SB 316 and begin reducing the disparity of tobacco use among our most vulnerable population. Thank you for your consideration of this important health issue.

James Dixon Gardner M.D. FACP
Board Member, TFKC