



To: Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Rachelle Colombo
Executive Director

Date: February 17, 2022

Re: SB 440; relating to direct referral for occupational therapy

The Kansas Medical Society appreciates the opportunity to provide neutral comments regarding SB 440.

SB 440 allows occupational therapists to treat patients without referral from a physician in limited circumstances for a defined time frame. Under the bill, an occupational therapist may provide treatment to help employees avoid workplace injuries, for special education students, and for other patients struggling with daily functional independence. The bill clearly establishes that individuals who do not show demonstrable progress after ten patient visits or 30 calendar days cannot return for services without physician referral in that year. The bill also establishes that occupational therapists do not make a medical diagnosis and may only attend to wound care management as approved by a physician. A hospital or medical facility may still require physician referral for occupational therapy services and occupational therapists must carry professional liability insurance.

The Kansas Medical Society appreciates the careful construction of this proposal to allow patients to have direct access to occupational therapy in appropriately limited circumstances that do not disrupt continuity of physician-directed medical care.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.