



Board of Directors

Chip Blaser
Douglas Co. Community Found.

Jo D. Clepper, MSN, MHA, RN, CCRN
Nueterra

Barb Conant
Kansas Advocates for Better Care

Janelle Delinger, RDH, MSDH
Kansas Dental Hygienists' Assoc.

John Fales, DDS
Fales Pediatric Dentistry

Robyne Goales
Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Kansas

Krista Hahn, RDH, MBA, ECP III
Community Health Ministry

Bill Hammond
USD 443 Business Office

Schaunta James-Boyd
EC Tyree Health and Dental Clinic

Steve Peppes
Delta Dental of Kansas

Jill Quigley, RN

Kevin Robertson, MPA, CAE
Kansas Dental Association

Amber Sellers

Becky M. Smith, DDS
UMKC School of Dentistry

Brian Smith, E.D.
Galena School District

**HB 2595 Testimony
February 17, 2016**

House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development.

Chairman Hutton and Members of the Committee,

I am Tanya Dorf Brunner, Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas. As a non-profit advocacy organization, we work to educate Kansans that good oral health is an integral part of good overall health. We support fair access to oral health prevention and treatment services, with a special emphasis on the needs of underserved populations.

We stand opposed to House Bill 2595, because some provisions of the bill appear to prohibit our efforts to fulfill our mission: to improve oral health in Kansas through advocacy, public awareness, and education. We are aware this bill has targets larger than us. However, provisions of Section 1 (d) concerning "food nutrition information" and Section 1 (f) "consumer incentive items" when applied to portions of Section 2 would hinder our ability to conduct two programs currently in operation. In the promotion of water consumption over unhealthy drink choices, our program and those governmental entities that support our educational efforts would be breaking the law this bill proposes.

In 2015, Oral Health Kansas was awarded a three-year grant named Thirsty for Health by the Kansas Health Foundation. The overall goals of the grant are to advocate on behalf of and connect school districts that are interested in encouraging access to clean drinking water and healthy drinking behaviors for students. For the sake of improving public oral health, we have the opportunity to help change perceptions so water is considered a healthier choice over sugary beverages like soda or energy and sports drinks. This effort has widespread and exponentially positive benefits in fighting tooth decay.

Two goals specifically outlined in the Thirsty for Health grant are a contest and social media campaign featuring a water cartoon character, see Section 1 (f) of the bill. This cartoon character is to be developed by students through organized focus groups. It will eventually be licensed and used in promotional communications to show that drinking water is not only the right thing to do because it is healthy, but it is also the "cool" choice. Unfortunately, if enacted, HB 2595 would not allow focus groups, the creation of a character or any incentives for students and school communities, as they would be in violation of the proposed law.

Our commitment is to provide support through resources and educational materials aimed at improving access to oral health. Through face-to-face discussions as well as printed materials, Oral Health Kansas does characterize beverage operations as healthy or unhealthy - which is prohibited under HB 2595, Section 1 (d). To achieve the goals of the Thirsty for Health project, we must be able to talk about the effects beverage choices have on Kansans' oral health and overall health. HB 2595 undermines and limits potential success in achieving these initiatives. Therefore, we oppose HB 2595 as currently written. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

800 SW Jackson, Suite 1120
Topeka, KS 66612

785.235.6039 (phone)
785.233.5564 (fax)
info@oralhealthkansas.org

www.oralhealthkansas.org