



TO: House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

FROM: Jaron Caffrey, Project Manager of Workforce Strategies

DATE: February 13, 2023

RE: House Bill 2292 - Proponent

The Kansas Hospital Association, Kansas Health Care Association, Leading Age Kansas, and Community Care Network of Kansas appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill 2292.

Kansas health care facilities are committed to serving our communities by providing the highest levels of care to all that walk through our doors. As health care organizations broadly have felt the impacts of the health care workforce shortage that has gripped the industry over the last few years in particular, it is more important than ever to ensure our health care institutions can pursue new strategies to address these workforce issues. One promising approach is the use of healthcare apprenticeships.

There currently are an estimated 325 LPN vacancies in Kansas and around 900 vacant CNA and Patient Care Technician roles across the state. As health care in Kansas continues to battle high turnover, historically high vacancy rates and employers competing for the same pool of skilled workers, health care apprenticeships provide a pathway to address these workforce issues by keeping talent in local communities and upskilling staff to provide even higher levels of patient care.

Health care apprenticeships, while new to Kansas, are not new to dozens of states across the country that have developed robust programs that allow facilities to apprentice roles crucial to the healthcare team including Certified Nursing Assistants, Medical Assistants, Patient Care Technicians, Licensed Practical Nurses, and even non-clinical roles such as dietary and environmental services staff. Healthcare apprenticeships give employees (both incumbent workers and new hires) a structured pathway to advance their careers in the healthcare industry by earning valuable credentials that are necessary in healthcare to provide patient care, while having a paying job that is relevant to the field they are pursuing training in. This is equally beneficial for employers, with the industry showing that apprenticeships have 90% retention rates, reduces the need for contract labor, fills crucial vacancies, builds the pipeline of workers, supports new hires through mentoring, and improves productivity.

Every health care organization has differing needs, and apprenticeship allows each facility to take an approach that fits their specific needs. A small facility may only desire to apprentice a handful of employees annually, while others will be looking to apprentice dozens of workers.

Many facilities both big and small lack the bandwidth by HR teams to launch this scope of a project alone. Through the use of apprenticeship intermediaries, health care HR teams gain a partner that can do much of the “heavy lifting” to get apprenticeship programs off the ground across the state. We believe this opportunity to provide funding assistance to health care organizations to cover the development and administrative costs is exactly what is needed in order to kickstart health care apprenticeships. Other states including Texas, North Dakota, and Iowa, have targeted millions of dollars in funding to support healthcare apprenticeships to give their facilities this kickstart to promote apprenticeships. Kansas has an opportunity to do the same, and we believe it can help make a significant impact on the workforce issues we face.

We ask that when the committee work House Bill 2292, they consider an amendment creating a special fund in the Office of Apprenticeship for the purpose of healthcare apprenticeship that shall receive \$1.5 million for healthcare entities that are hospitals, health clinics, long-term care entities, or federally qualified health centers to receive funds for the administration of the apprenticeship programs. Each healthcare entity can qualify for up to \$15,000 annually.”

Thank you for consideration of our comments.