



**Kansas Hospital
ASSOCIATION**

TO: House Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget

FROM: Jaron Caffrey, Director of Workforce and Health Care Policy
Tara Mays, Vice President State Legislative Affairs

DATE: January 31, 2025

RE: Kansas Department of Commerce Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on behalf of our 121 community hospital members. Our hospitals remain committed to serving patients in your communities but we need this committee to continue the investments that we have made in our hospitals over the last few years.

Last summer we heard from a rural Critical Access Hospital in Jewell County, Kansas about an interest in allowing Laboratory Technicians to begin Saline Lock Services for patients in the Emergency Room. This would allow ER Nurses to be able to stay focused on emergency patient care when they have patient volumes that require more attention of the RN's and LPN's on shift.

As they explored allowing training for these staff members, the closest one was in Kansas City, Missouri, a nearly 4 hour drive from their hospital and wasn't available for many months. These trainings are often needed regionally and in a more on-demand way than what our higher education facilities can provide.

At the Kansas Hospital Association, we explored ways that we could work with our partners in the long-term care community to tackle these challenges. In an effort to ensure we looked at what currently works well, we discussed with the Kansas Department of Commerce potential avenues for what might make sense, and they pointed us to the Kansas Industrial Training and Re-Training programs (KIT/KIR). Creating a health care equivalent program is a strong step in the right direction for as-needed grant options for hospitals and long-term care to partner together, or with higher education to allow for trainings that are needed to upskill the existing workforce and stretch our clinical resources.

We know in Kansas that our population is aging and Kansas is facing a critical nursing shortage that will require us to continue to think more innovatively about how we can get Kansans the care that they need. We believe the Health Care Upskilling Training Grant Program is an innovative approach that makes significant progress towards that goal.

We urge the committee to consider re-instating the Department of Commerce's recommendation to allocate \$2 million for the Health Care Upskilling Training Grant Program.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.