

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Garry Boston at 1:30 p.m. on February 28 in Room 210 Memorial Hall

All members were present except: Representative Geraldine Flaharty, Excused  
Representative Brenda Landwehr, Excused  
Representative Dale Swenson, Excused  
Representative Gwen Welshimer, Excused

Committee staff present: Dr. Bill Wolff, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Renaë Jefferies, Revisor of Statute's Office  
June Evans, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Dr. Charles Magruder, Director of Community Health, Wichita

Others attending: See Attached Sheet

The Chairperson introduced Renaë Jefferies, Revisor of Statute's Office, replacing Norman Furse as she has been working the bills in the Senate.

The Chairperson introduced Dr. Charles Magruder, Director of Community Health, Wichita-Sedgwick County Department of Community Health, Wichita, who briefed the committee on bioterrorism. There is a threat of bioterrorism and the local health departments are clearly unable to respond adequately. Without special preparation at the local and state levels, a large scale attack with variola virus, aerosolized anthrax spores, a nerve gas, or a foodborne biological or chemical agent could overwhelm the local and perhaps national public health infrastructure. Detection and surveillance are important because the initial detection of a covert biological or chemical attack will probably occur at the local level, disease surveillance systems at state and local health agencies must be capable of detecting unusual patterns of disease or injury, including those caused by unusual or unknown threat agents. Capable health departments are the most essential components for a successful response to biological terrorism. No local health department in Kansas possesses the necessary infrastructure to manage this responsibility.

Additional funding will be required to develop this essential infrastructure. An essential step on completing the process of being ready for an attack has been identified by Secretary Graeber and he has appropriately identified this proposal as his number one priority – increase State Formula funding for local health departments (Attachment 1).

The Chairperson announced there would not be a full committee meeting tomorrow, March 1, enabling the sub-committee on licensing to meet during the allotted time.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm. and the next meeting will be March 5.