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**Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee  
Proponent for SB 129  
February 17, 2021**

Chairman Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 129. My name is Tanya Dorf Brunner, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas, Inc. We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong dental health by shaping policy and educating the public, so Kansans know that all mouths matter.

Oral Health Kansas recognizes the need to expand and strengthen the dental workforce in Kansas. We believe access to both a provider and a payment source need to be strengthened in order to ensure all Kansans have access to good oral health care. Without a funding source, people do not have access to dental services. Likewise, without a dental provider, people do not have access to dental services. Both are critical, and one of our key priorities is to strengthen the Kansas Medicaid program by ensuring all people eligible for the program have access to dental services.

A 2020 report by the Kansas Health Institute in collaboration with Oral Health Kansas, noted that only half of nonelderly Kansas adults reported having a dental visit in the last year.<sup>1</sup> That percentage was even worse for children enrolled in Medicaid, as shown in the 2021 Kansas Oral Health Report Card.<sup>2</sup> Inability to find a dental provider is one potential barrier that could be addressed through the passage of SB 129 to improve access to dental care. Oral Health Kansas recognizes the need to expand and strengthen the dental workforce in Kansas and supports the efforts being undertaken to address this issue through the establishment of dental therapist licensure in SB 129.

Oral Health Kansas is dedicated to increasing access to dental care for all Kansans, and we are happy to support SB 129. We encourage the Committee to pass the bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director  
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<sup>1</sup>Dental Insurance Coverage and Unmet Dental Needs in Kansas. November 2020. doi:  
<http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/Dental%20Insurance%20Report/DentalInsuranceUnmetNeedsKansas.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Kansas Oral Health Report Card. February 2021. doi:  
<http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/pdf/2021%20Oral%20Health%20Report%20Card.pdf>