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TO: Special Committee on Organization of Public Health Boards

FROM: Todd Fleischer, Executive Director

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on behalf of the Kansas Optometric Association regarding the recommendations in the Alvarez and Marsal Efficiency Study on consolidation of the administration of the public health boards.

The KOA represents optometrists across the state, all of whom are licensed by the Kansas State Board of Examiners in Optometry (KSBE). From the provider perspective, our members view the KSBE as efficient and professional, offering the necessary level of service in a timely manner.

In fact, at recent regional meetings across the state, we queried optometrists about their perspectives on the organization of the KSBE and any questions or concerns they had regarding licensing fees, responsiveness to questions or concerns, and overall ease of dealing with the regulatory requirements necessary to practice in Kansas. The consensus in every meeting was that the KSBE operated effectively and efficiently, with KSBE staff and board members being very responsive and knowledgeable about specific issues related to the optometric profession. When asked about licensing fees, they also believed that the fees were fair and reasonable and that their preference would be that the board administration and organization remain as it was currently.

From the association perspective, we believe the KSBE fulfills its mission of protecting the public quite well, due to the specific knowledge of its administrative staff on issues around vision and eye health that more generalized administrative staff may not have. And as a regular audience member at KSBE meetings, it is apparent that the board continually strives to enhance the level of service to the public and licensees – through collaboration where appropriate and specialization where not – while at the same time controlling costs through implementation of technology solutions and other measures.

We view the study as an excellent opportunity to create dialogue around areas where the public health boards can collaborate to find efficiencies. We believe many of those conversations have already started taking place in the name of cost control and service enhancement, and we look forward to seeing the results of those continued discussions among the independent public health boards. We support the position of the KSBE that the public health boards remain in their current organizational structure without an umbrella agency, which might lead to a loss of the efficiency and specialization that allows the boards to best serve the public and their licensees.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer comments on this issue.