

Neutral Testimony on HB 2371
House Child Welfare and Foster Care Committee
February 20th, 2023

Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Ousley, and Members of the Child Welfare and Foster Care Committee, thank you for the opportunity today to speak to you about the impact of HB 2371 on caseload sizes. Laws designed to limit caseload size send the message that the state is committed to quality services as well as resource allocation to meet those requirements.

My name is Matt Stephens, and I currently serve as the Vice President of Foster Care Homes for Saint Francis Ministries.

Saint Francis Ministries (SFM) is an independent not-for-profit that has served Kansas children and families since 1945. At Saint Francis, we remain committed to providing high-quality services and programs to meet the needs of Kansas children and families. Today, Saint Francis provides a continuum of child welfare services that include reintegration and adoption case management, prevention, out-of-home, and residential services.

Saint Francis Ministries has provided case management services as one of the contractors or grantees since 2000. Most of that work has occurred in rural areas, specifically Western Kansas. Knowing the challenges of the available workforce capacity, miles to travel, and the challenges of available and acceptable services in the rural area, (The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health: *Subcommittee on Rural Issues*) SFM began this work with a dyad model. SFM defines a dyad model as the partnership of a case manager with a paraprofessional to support the families on their caseloads. Saint Francis Ministries has seen success with the dyad model because it:

- Provides natural coverage to the family by having two staff members available to meet their needs
- Allows two members of the workforce to know the family intimately for increased support and coverage
- Allowed members of the workforce who did not hold advanced degrees the opportunity to provide child welfare services.
- And, SFM discovered during the challenging times of increased staff turnover is that the model provides continuity of services during turnover.

Due to this success, the dyad model has been implemented when SFM began providing case management in urban areas with the same success for the reasons stated above. Having two people working with the family provides enhanced service coverage and the assignment is not on one person. With this model, it does allow the Licensed person to carry a higher caseload, much like a Doctor now has PAs and APRNs or hospital model with nursing and CNAs.

Saint Francis Ministries

Providing Healing and Hope to Children and Families



Saint Francis remains neutral on HB2371, however, wants to recognize in a dyad model there is additional support provided. Given the intricacies of our model, we would like for there to be consideration for flexibility in definition of caseload sizes. As the bill is currently written, it will not support our current service delivery model. We know quality care is at the forefront of the members of this committee and want to ensure we are consistently innovating to meet the needs of Kansas children and families.

Thank you, I am willing to stand for questions at the appropriate time.