

Testimony by Tim DeWeese, Director of Johnson County Mental Health Center to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice in support of House Bill 2353

Increasing the amount of time a person may be held for treatment and adding criteria for when continued treatment may be ordered under the care and treatment act for mentally ill persons.

February 8, 2024

Chairman Owens and members of the committee, my name is Tim DeWeese, and I serve as the director of Johnson County Mental Health Center. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today in **support** of HB 2353.

Johnson County Mental Health Center began operating in 1962 by providing outpatient services with four employees in one location. Today, 62 years later, we have over 400 employees in five locations providing community-based mental health and substance use treatment services to 12,000 residents annually. We are a department of Johnson County Government, licensed by the State of Kansas as a Community Mental Health Center, accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International and certified as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) by the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS).

JCMHC works closely with Johnson County District Court to provide mental health and substance use treatment services through programs like assisted outpatient treatment (AOT), veterans treatment court, and the new behavioral health court launched in 2023. We have seen how programs like AOT make a difference in Johnson County. They help individuals integrate back into our community after a period of inpatient hospitalization and reduce future instances of hospitalization and interactions with law enforcement.

By providing additional time—an increase from 48 to 72 hours—during the involuntary hold period, the changes in this bill will grant courts and providers like us a more reasonable period to oversee an individual's transition back into the community. Because of court supervision and community-based mental health services, individuals in mandatory outpatient treatment often reach a point where they no longer meet the statutory criteria for inpatient treatment and, thus, can no longer be on an outpatient treatment order. The added time will help more individuals complete outpatient treatment before being fully discharged from an order.

Because the changes in this bill will provide additional, appropriate outpatient treatment to help reduce hospitalizations and law enforcement interactions for people with a serious mental illness, Johnson County Mental Health Center supports HB 2353 and asks the members of the committee to recommend its passage.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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