



Saint Francis Community Services®

Serving Children and Families Since 1945

Testimony to Kansas Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Monday, February 20, 2017

Support for SB 165, concerning opioids

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to come before the committee to provide comments in support of SB 165.

Saint Francis Community Services (SFCS) is a Kansas-based, mission-driven nonprofit centered in the Episcopal tradition. With roots as a home for ‘wayward youths’ in Ellsworth, Kansas in 1945, Saint Francis Community Services has developed a range of services for children, adults, and families in Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and internationally in our El Salvador office. Saint Francis Community Services provides residential services, substance abuse treatment programs, behavioral health, and child welfare case management. The mission of Saint Francis Community Services is to *provide healing and hope to children and families*.

SFCS focuses on providing quality care to vulnerable populations. Recent accomplishments include:

- Opening an innovative residential program for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation
- Developing programming to meet the legal, cultural, and resettlement needs of cross-border children and families whether residing in the US or abroad
- Award-winning residential programming for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Partnering with state and national research partners to contribute to the growing body of evidence-based data related to parent engagement, child and family assessment, and trauma-informed services in foster care
- Opening a state-of-the-art Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility for youth with significant mental health and behavioral challenges

As a service provider to children and families in crisis, SFCS has witnessed first-hand the impact of opioid addiction among parents struggling to care for their children. Substance abuse – and particularly the opioid epidemic – is emerging as a major contributing factor in increased pressure on foster care systems nationwide.¹ Making sure that all appropriate treatment options are available and covered by insurance is an important step in strengthening the systems of support needed by those struggling with addiction; and thereby, offers prevention and protection to vulnerable children. Saint Francis Community Services supports SB 165.

Thank you for your consideration.

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¹ Teresa Wiltz, **Drug-Addiction Epidemic Creates Crisis in Foster Care**, Pew Charitable Trust, October 07, 2016; Dayna Bowen Matthew and Alice M. Rivlin, **Unfinished business: Bipartisan help for child victims of the opioid crisis**, The Hill, January 12, 2017