



**Testimony of John Smith, Stanton County Commissioner
Before the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
In Support of Senate Bill No. 407
March 11, 2020**

Member Counties

Barber

Barton

Clark

Ellis

Finney

Ford

Gove

Grant

Gray

Hamilton

Harper

Haskell

Hodgeman

Kearny

Lane

Logan

Meade

Morton

Ness

Norton

Rawlins

Rice

Russell

Rush

Scott

Seward

Sherman

Stanton

Stevens

Thomas

Trego

Wallace

Wichita

Chairperson Suellentrop and Members of the Committee:

Kansas Legislative Policy Group (KLPG) would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Senate Bill No. 407. KLPG is a non-partisan organization comprised of elected commissioners representing the collective interests of 33 rural Kansas counties.

Senate Bill No. 407 requires the Department of Aging and Disability Services, through existing resources, to operate acute inpatients psychiatric care beds for children in the cities of Hays and Garden City or surrounding area. KLPG supports Senate Bill No. 407.

No child in crisis or their parents should suffer needlessly, but without local treatment facilities many of our residents do. Because of the lack of mental health facilities in the western part of the State, families are forced to travel great distances from home to seek medical attention for their children. Not only must they travel to receive professional help, families also stay during the duration of their loved one's treatment. This creates a very real burden and hardship on working parents and other family members.

The western area of the State is in dire need of mental health support. Our emergency rooms, hospitals and county jails are not equipped to provide necessary inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment and counseling.

We are aware of the fiscal cost associated with this legislation, but any assistance the Senate can provide to reduce the gap in this mental health care would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the Committee. We ask that you support Senate Bill No. 407.

John Smith
President
Kansas Legislative Policy Group

