



Testimony to House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice on HB 2200

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Chair Owens, and members of the Committee, my name is Kyle Kessler. I am the Executive Director for the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. The Association represents the 26 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas that provide behavioral health services in all 105 counties, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. In Kansas, CMHCs are the local Mental Health Authorities coordinating the delivery of publicly funded community-based mental health services. As part of licensing regulations, CMHCs are required to provide services to all Kansans needing them, regardless of their ability to pay. This makes the community mental health system the “safety net” for Kansans with behavioral health needs.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2200.

The primary goal of CMHCs is to provide quality care, treatment, and rehabilitation to individuals with behavioral health problems in the least restrictive environment. The CMHCs strongly endorse treatment at the community level in order to allow individuals to continue functioning in their own homes and communities. CMHCs provide a wide range of services and programs, including many evidence-based practices (EBPs).

Our Association strongly supports policy improvements and resource identification and expansion that will help the crossover youth population. Recommendation 8.4 of the most recent Mental Health Modernization and Reform Committee states as much by expressing support for the Kansas Department of Corrections statewide recommendations and recommending that local juvenile corrections advisory boards (JCABs) implement the recommendations. This population needs and deserves additional attention to help address the trauma most if not all have experienced.

Across the CMHC system, there is a growing focus on expanding the use of evidence-based programs. Our members are actively engaged with the Evidence-Based Practices Subcommittee of the Governor’s Behavioral Health Services Planning Council, which was established following passage of legislation in 2021 to establish the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model, to support interagency collaboration and education of EBPs and develop a sustainable framework to strengthen and expand access for all Kansans.

The community mental health system is now in the process of transitioning to the CCBHC model, and it is anticipated that up to seven CMHCs will attain CCBHC certification this fiscal year, with more to follow over the next two to three years. The CCBHC model includes a heavy

emphasis on the use of evidence-based programs. The CCBHC criteria issued by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) specifically requires states to establish a minimum set of EBPs that will be offered by all CCBHCs and further requires that the programs be “developmentally appropriate, youth guided, and family/caregiver driven with respect to children and adolescents.”

With this heightened and continued focus on providing EBPs to youth and their families in community settings, we look forward to working with the Department of Corrections and Department of Children and Families to provide services to those juveniles and their families as described in this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today, and I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.