



**KVC Kansas Testimony on Senate Bill 238**  
**Submitted by Linda Bass, President**  
**February 18, 2021**

Kansas Legislators:

My name is Linda Bass, PhD and I lead the child welfare and behavioral health organization KVC Kansas. I am also licensed by the Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board (BSRB) as a Clinical Marriage and Family Therapist (LCMFT). KVC Kansas is a nonprofit organization that strengthens families, prevents child abuse and neglect, and helps both children and adults achieve mental health wellness. We employ approximately 445 professionals based at 10 locations across the state. We provide in-home family support to safely prevent foster care, outpatient behavioral healthcare, foster care, adoption and more. We serve 30,000 Kansas children and families each year.

I'm writing today in support of Senate Bill 238 because it adds critical flexibility to supervision and licensing standards from the Kansas BSRB, the agency that protects and serves consumers of behavioral science services. These behavioral sciences include psychology, social work, addiction counseling, and marriage and family therapy.

Nearly all of our clinical staff require supervision, but currently the statute only allows clinical supervision to happen in person. Senate Bill 238 would allow clinical supervision conducted by videoconferencing to be accepted by the BSRB under extenuating circumstances such as a pandemic. In the same way that Zoom has allowed children's education to continue, videoconferencing has allowed for supervision to safely continue during the pandemic (even when people were quarantined) so it has enabled more consistent clinical supervision to occur. As a provider of clinical supervision, I can assure you that the quality of supervision is not compromised in any way through the use of teleconferencing.

We support the allowance of videoconferencing going forward because it would also make clinical supervision more accessible to therapists who are practicing in rural and frontier locations where clinically licensed supervisors are residing/practicing in the same area and cut down on long commute times for these therapists who must travel several hours for in-person supervision.

Mental health needs have risen dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that's true across the U.S. and right here in our Kansas communities from Topeka to Pittsburg to Dodge City. [According to the Kaiser Family Foundation](#), 53% of U.S. adults say that worry and stress related to the coronavirus has negatively impacted their mental health. In addition, 36% of U.S. adults report difficulty sleeping, 32% report negative impacts on their eating, 12% report

increases in alcohol consumption or substance use, and 12% are experiencing worsening chronic conditions.

At KVC staff, our administrative support teams ranging from IT to Accounting have a saying which is, “We help the helpers.” This bill provides an opportunity for elected officials to “help the helpers” by ensuring that our state’s frontline, essential social workers and behavioral health providers can easily access required supervision, no matter where they are in the state and without additional, unnecessary risk to their health. In turn, this stabilizes and supports our mental health provider community, and it means more children and families can access lifesaving, life-changing mental health treatment. I request your support of this bill. Thank you.