

## MINUTES

### 2022 SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH BEDS

December 21, 2022

Virtual

#### Members Present

Senator Carolyn McGinn, Chairperson  
Representative Brenda Landwehr, Vice Chairperson  
Senator Rick Billinger  
Senator Tom Hawk  
Representative Will Carpenter  
Representative Kyle Hoffman  
Representative Troy Waymaster  
Representative Kathy Wolfe Moore

#### Members Absent

Senator J.R. Claeys  
Representative Henry Helgerson  
Senator Richard Hilderbrand

#### Staff Present

Megan Leopold, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Dayton LaMunyon, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Elizabeth Cohn, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Eileen Ma, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Jenna Moyer, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Scott Abbott, Office of Revisor of Statutes  
Gary Deeter, Committee Assistant

#### Conferees

Carol Moreland, Executive Administrator, Board of Nursing  
Lucinda Whitney, Clinical Associate Professor, University of Kansas School of Nursing  
David Fye, Executive Director, Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board  
Timothy Davis, Director, Social Work Program, Fort Hays State University  
Kyle Kessler, Executive Director, Association of Community Mental Health Centers of  
Kansas  
Mike Dixon, State Hospital Commissioner, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability  
Services  
Blake Flanders, President and Chief Executive Officer, State Board of Regents  
Heather Morgan, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Community College Trustees

## **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21 MORNING SESSION**

### **Call to Order**

Via Webex, Chairperson McGinn called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. and referenced the list of questions that served as the agenda for the meeting ([Attachment 1](#)). All members and conferees attended the meeting via Webex.

### **Roundtable Discussion on Behavioral Health Workforce**

#### ***License Accessibility/Transferability for Entry-level Certification of Staff***

Carol Moreland, Executive Administrator, Board of Nursing, while noting that the present licensing process is not cumbersome, acknowledged that some regulations or statutes could be modified. She commented that Kansas does not have an endorsement policy or regulation like other states, including California or Colorado, but a task force is evaluating a comparable educational pathway. Ms. Moreland stated that the only educational program for Licensed Mental Health Technicians (LMHTs) is at Osawatomie State Hospital. She recommended increasing the number of educational faculty so that additional programs could be offered in other parts of the state.

Dr. Lucinda Whitney, Clinical Associate Professor, University of Kansas School of Nursing, commented that initial and continuing education training programs for LMHTs do not provide any college credit. She stated that including college credit for these programs could enhance recruitment and retention.

David Fye, Executive Director, Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board, reviewed the mental health positions for which the Board provides oversight and explained the changes being studied or finalized, including lowering the hours for clinical-level licensees, lowering the requirements for reciprocity to more easily recruit out-of-state health-care workers, eliminating regulations that represent unnecessary barriers for prospective licensees, and creating a temporary license for students.

Mr. Fye responded to members' questions with the following information:

- Currently, reciprocity enables an out-of-state individual to begin work in Kansas immediately if there is no record of disciplinary issues; and
- Decisions regarding license requirements are initiated by staff and then acted on by the Board.

## ***Retired Workforce***

Dr. Whitney addressed four methods to allow an individual to return to the workforce:

- Refreshing technical education to familiarize a person with current technology;
- Lowering the costs for re-certification;
- Assuring a tolerable workload; and
- Providing clinical supervision.

She commented that offering clinical supervision is a proven investment to sustain and retain workers.

Mr. Fye commented on two initiatives in the licensing process that will provide incentives for applicants: reducing re-certification fees and allowing a temporary license so an applicant can begin work while completing continuing education requirements.

Conferees responded to members' questions:

- Mr. Fye stated that BSRB is willing to reduce the hours for licensees and address other regulations that may be onerous;
- Dr. Whitney stated the costs for clinical supervision are usually covered by the healthcare organization; and
- Mr. Fye stated that a re-certification applicant is required to make up only the most recent period to meet continuing education regulations.

## ***Incentives to Attract Additional Workforce***

Timothy Davis, Director for Social Work Programs, Fort Hays State University, noted that some incentive programs are not well utilized and could be better publicized. He commented that two of the most effective options are to offer scholarships to students for specific professions and seek local sponsors for students. He explained that early recruitment through the high schools is one of the most effective measures for supplementing workforce shortages.

Kyle Kessler, Executive Director, Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, identified two incentive programs being used effectively in Kansas: the federal National Health Services Corps and the student loan repayment program. Both are designed to attract professionals to serve in rural areas, the latter being effective in attracting out-of-state professionals as well as encouraging medical doctors to specialize in psychiatry.

Mike Dixon, State Hospital Commissioner, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, encouraged members to create or offer bonus pathways for relocation, retention, and continuing education.

Blake Flanders, President and Chief Executive Officer, State Board of Regents, stated that the Promise Act offered flexible scholarships that bolster the workforce. He also noted that there are other scholarships that could be modified to encourage individuals toward mental health careers. Mr. Flanders also recommended that increasing outreach to community colleges, technical colleges, and high schools could strengthen workforce recruitment.

Ms. Moreland recommended expanding incentives for LMHTs by partnering with colleges to provide college credit hours for required continuing education/training.

A Committee member requested that Dr. Dixon provide the relevant statutes that may limit bonus programs.

### ***Efficacy of Incentive Programs***

Mr. Flanders commented that the Promise Act has inherent tracking mechanisms that focus on local results; the State Board of Regents provides the reporting to the federal government. Responding to a question, he replied that the Board works in partnership with the Department of Labor for statistical information.

Heather Morgan, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, recommended creating a centralized information source for all incentive programs. She also recommended expanding the focus of 2012 SB 155 to include high school students.

### ***Wage Disparities***

Mr. Dixon noted that students are offered many options other than mental/behavioral health careers. He commented that the 24/7 pay plan has helped workforce morale and he recommended annual step increases for staff as a retention incentive.

Ms. Morgan said staff recruitment/retention is difficult when faculty wages are not competitive with the private sector. She recommended offering health insurance coverage for staff in entry-level positions.

Mr. Davis noted that Kansas ranks in the lowest tier for healthcare staff, and he recommended increasing starting salaries.

Mr. Kessler identified the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic model as an effective way to attract professional staff.

### **Approval of November 28, 2022, Minutes**

*Representative Landwehr moved, and Senator Hawk seconded, to approve the November 28, 2022, meeting minutes. The motion passed.*

## Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m. No further meeting was scheduled.

Prepared by Gary Deeter

Edited by Megan Leopold and Dayton  
LaMunyon

Approved by the Committee on:

January 13, 2023

(Date)