



February 8, 2024

House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice

Prepared and presented by:
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House Committee Chair, Representative Stephen Owens, Vice Chair Representative Eric L Smith, Ranking Minority Member, Representative John Carmichael, and the full membership of House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning **HB 2353**.

My name is Dr. Sherrie Vaughn, and I am writing in support of **HB 2353**.

HB 2353 allows for the extension of the duration of treatment for individuals and introduces new guidelines for determining the need for continued treatment under the care and treatment act for mentally ill individuals. Moreover, it allows for the option of court-ordered outpatient treatment instead of inpatient treatment, providing provisions of certain criteria. This bill promotes treatment in a less restrictive setting when suitable and necessary.

Why is this important? I am glad you asked.

National statistics on mental illness indicate that approximately one in five people are living with a mental illness. In Kansas, this translates to approximately 600,000 Kansans.¹ Furthermore, based on data from the US Department of Justice and NAMI², 2 in 5 incarcerated persons have a history of mental illness (37% in state and federal prisons and 44% in local jails). Additionally, about 3 in 5 people with a mental illness do not receive mental health treatment while incarcerated in state and federal prisons, less than half (45%) receive mental health treatment while held in local jails, and suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in local jails.³

We at NAMI and NAMI Kansas believe that “people with mental illness deserve help, not handcuffs. ... Yet people with mental illness are overrepresented in our nation’s jails and prisons. We need to reduce criminal justice system involvement and increase investments in mental health care.”⁴

¹ [Mental Health By the Numbers | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

² [Mental Health By the Numbers | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

³ [Mental Health By the Numbers | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

⁴ [Mental Health By the Numbers | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

At NAMI Kansas, we have three goals: 1. People Get Help Early, 2. People Get the Best Care Possible, and 3. People Get Diverted from the Justice System. The provisions in **HB 2353** allow for the early intervention of programs such as Assisted Outpatient Treatment, a program that allows “courts to order certain individuals with mental health conditions to comply with treatment while living in the community”⁵ and “allows the courts to commit the mental health system to providing treatment.”⁶

The proposed amendments to **HB 2353** would benefit court-ordered treatment such as Assisted Outpatient Treatment and allow our courts and mental health centers to help this vulnerable population gain sustainable and consistent access to mental health treatment.

Your support for **HB 2353** is appreciated and will benefit many lives!

Thank you for your time,

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⁵ [AOT \(Assisted Outpatient Treatment\) Guide : Mental Illness Policy Org](#)

⁶ [AOT \(Assisted Outpatient Treatment\) Guide : Mental Illness Policy Org](#)