



## Testimony to House Health and Human Services on HB 2667

Chair Carpenter and members of the Committee, my name is Patrick Schmitz. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer for the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, Inc. In July of this year, our agency will celebrate its 74<sup>th</sup> year of service to the citizens of Douglas County, Kansas. In October of 2023, we became the first CMHC to earn full designation as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic. As such we are a comprehensive CMHC/CCBHC with services that span the traditional therapy, psychiatry, case management, community-based supports, employment development and support, intensive outpatient, and some uncommon services including a forensic team at our county jail, homeless outreach and housing supports, and transitional housing to name a few. In recent years we have expanded our services to include Assertive Community Treatment, medication assisted treatment, and a mobile response team in partnership with our local 988 call center.

Notably as to my testimony today, we are honored to be the operator of the Treatment & Recovery Center of Douglas County, hereafter referred to as the TRC, which was specifically designed to be the first Crisis Intervention Center as envisioned in the Crisis Intervention Center Act Legislation passed by the Legislature in 2017. The TRC has three levels of care available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week, 365-days a year. The first level is the Urgent Care Unit, which operates as a behavioral health crisis emergency department, accessible across all ages for those experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

The next two levels of care, available to those 18 years of age and older, are the 23-Hour Observation and the 72-Hour Stabilization Units. These two units give us the additional gift of time as we work with our community members during the early stages of their behavioral health crisis. With 98% of all individuals treated at the TRC returned to the community following their episode of care, the TRC is critical in our ability to achieve a reduced reliance on the local hospital's emergency department behavioral health unit, state and private psychiatric hospital programs, and our local jail. From its opening in April of 2023 to the end of December 2023, the TRC provided 1,861 crisis intervention episodes to 1,074 unique individuals, with 954 admitted to the Observation or Stabilization units. We accepted 99.7% of all referrals and had an average law enforcement turn-around time of 4 minutes.

In preparing for the opening of the TRC, it was clear that even with the combined funding through the CCBHC Prospective Payment System for the Medicaid population, commercial insurance, and the Douglas County sales tax support for its residents, the CIC Lottery Vending Machine revenue funding was necessary to close the gap and ensure access to all. This latter funding, which amounts to 27.5% of the TRC budget in 2024, ensures access to all those uninsured and under-insured, and it has supported access to those outside of Douglas County.

It is for this reason I stand here today in support of HB 2667.



I'd like to share one of the many success stories that have come from the TRC. This one involves our strong collaboration with Heartland RADAC's Intensive Case Coordination program. They were trying to support an individual with a long history of severe alcoholism. Due to this individual's identity, they had access to some additional resources available to them, including out of state treatment. However, accessing this care was elusive due to their condition and inability to maintain some sobriety. We were able to admit them to the TRC and began the process of sobering while coordinating admission to a program out of state. Because of the gap in time to be admitted to this longer-term treatment, we kept them at the TRC an extra 3 days to ensure that they were able to maintain sobriety prior to their residential treatment. The TRC team, along with Heartland RADAC, coordinated transportation for the individual to Topeka to get picked up by the residential facility's transportation service. This client had been waiting for months to get into a facility and with coordination and collaboration of our partners, we were able to get them safely detoxed, stabilized and they are currently thriving in the 30-day program.

In conclusion, House Bill 2667 represents a significant opportunity to enhance mental health support in our communities. By adding more available funding through this legislation, you help ensure greater access to crisis behavioral health care across the State of Kansas. As the CEO of the Bert Nash Center, I wholeheartedly endorse this legislation and urge you to support its passage for the betterment of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.