Corterra
OF WICHITA
SENIOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Testimony re: HB 2587
Senate Public Health Committee
Submitted by: Erik Hatten
On behalf of Corterra of Wichita

Chairman Gossage,

My name is Erik Hatten, and I am the CEO of Corterra of Wichita, a private psychiatric hospital serving seniors age 55 and older experiencing an acute mental health crisis. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of HB 2587, legislation that would allow the use of emergency medication kits, or e-kits, in facilities like ours.

Corterra of Wichita provides short-term, intensive inpatient psychiatric treatment in a safe and structured environment. Our patients often arrive in moments of severe distress, confusion, agitation, or behavioral escalation. Our mission is to stabilize patients safely, protect them and those around them, and coordinate a timely discharge back into the community.

Unlike general acute care hospitals, Corterra does not have a full pharmacy or an on-site pharmacist. This presents significant challenges when a patient experiences an aggressive or combative episode and requires timely administration of specific psychotropic medications to de-escalate the situation and prevent harm.

Under current regulations, our options are limited and inefficient. One option is to order a broad range of PRN medications for every patient in advance. This requires storing multiple medications that may never be used, strains our limited space, and results in unnecessary waste and increased healthcare costs. Another option is to contact our contracted pharmacy when an emergent medication is needed. This requires the pharmacy to prepare the medication and deliver it to our facility, or for our administrative staff to drive to the pharmacy to retrieve it. After hours, this often means a pharmacist must return to the pharmacy, from their home, to prepare the medication before it can be transported.

During these delays, the patient in crisis continues to suffer, and the risk of injury to staff and other patients increases. These workarounds place a significant burden on both our hospital and our pharmacy partners, while delaying care in situations where minutes truly matter.

Allowing the use of a carefully regulated e-kit containing specific psychotropic medications would directly address this gap in care. It would enable our clinical team to respond quickly and appropriately during behavioral emergencies—providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

The emergency medication kits we are requesting would be tightly controlled and consistent with existing Kansas emergency medication kit regulations used in long-term care settings under **K.A.R. 68-7-10 and 68-7-10a**. These kits contain only a limited set of medications necessary to address urgent or unforeseen changes in a patient's condition. The kits must be securely locked or sealed and accessible only to designated licensed nursing staff. They are stored in a designated cabinet, cart, or approved medication system and are subject to routine pharmacy oversight and monthly audits. Each kit carries an expiration date tied to the earliest expiring medication within the kit, and any time the kit is opened, the medications must be returned to the pharmacy with full documentation of their use.

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These safeguards ensure that emergency medication kits are used appropriately while still allowing timely access to medications during urgent situations.

This request is not about convenience. It is about patient safety, staff safety, and responsible, timely care for Kansas' most vulnerable population. Facilities like Corterra play a critical role in Kansas's behavioral health system, and HB 2587 would ensure we have the tools necessary to fulfill that role effectively.

On behalf of Corterra of Wichita, I respectfully urge your support of HB 2587. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.