



Chairwoman Lanwehr and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

This testimony is being submitted in opposition to HB 2578.

KVC Kansas is a foster care case management provider, child placing agency, outpatient services provider and residential treatment provider. KVC Kansas has been a provider of care for the most vulnerable Kansans for more than 50 years. As President of KVC Kansas, it is my responsibility to ensure every client we serve has access to behavioral health services in their community. This involves partnerships with many community organizations who are the providers of mental and behavioral health services such as crisis response, assessment, therapy, and case management.

HB 2578's intent to limit which organizations are eligible to become Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) raises significant concerns. At a time when Kansas urgently needs more behavioral health service providers, limiting the organizations that qualify is counterproductive. With Kansas ranking 48th out of 51 states (including the District of Columbia) in behavioral health service accessibility, HB2578 will further deprive thousands of Kansas children and adults of timely and accessible behavioral health treatment.

According to the State of Mental Health in America 2023 Report, Kansas ranks among the lowest of all states for mental health access and care:

- Access to care for all Kansans: Kansas is ranked 48 of 51. (Source: [Ranking the States 2023 | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#))

The report states that while there is a **growing demand for services, there is a shortage of mental health treatment providers.**

Access to Care Ranking 2023

Rank	State	18	North Dakota	36	Missouri
1	Vermont	19	New York	37	Louisiana
2	Massachusetts	20	Michigan	38	Nevada
3	Illinois	21	Ohio	39	North Carolina
4	Montana	22	Utah	40	Tennessee
5	District of Columbia	23	New Jersey	41	Wyoming
6	Pennsylvania	24	Kentucky	42	Mississippi
7	New Hampshire	25	Maryland	43	Indiana
8	Connecticut	26	Colorado	44	South Carolina
9	Wisconsin	27	Oklahoma	45	Arkansas
10	Rhode Island	28	Alaska	46	Florida
11	Maine	29	Nebraska	47	Arizona
12	South Dakota	30	Oregon	48	Kansas
13	Washington	31	California	49	Georgia
14	Minnesota	32	Hawaii	50	Alabama
15	Delaware	33	West Virginia	51	Texas
16	New Mexico	34	Virginia		
17	Iowa	35	Idaho		

The Healthy Kansans 2030 State Health Assessment (SHA) and State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) includes ***improved access to care*** as a primary target, including behavioral health and one of four priorities areas. The report concludes that while there is a ***growing demand for services, there is a shortage of mental health providers.***

Additionally, a key focus of the current McIntyre settlement agreement is lack of access to behavioral health services for youth in foster care. The same theme of lack of service array, long wait times and unavailable services, appears in the Children and Family Services Review (CSFR).

As the demand for behavioral health services continues to rise, Kansans endure the challenges and consequences of limited access to care. Now is a crucial moment to welcome more organizations as behavioral health service providers, expanding the range of care available, rather than restricting choices and access to treatment. As a provider of critical behavioral health services including assessment, mental health treatment and substance use disorder intervention, I assure you that limiting who can deliver these and other critical care services will harm children and families.

I urge this committee to closely examine the impact of this bill and not support legislation that further restricts access to care, especially regarding our most vulnerable Kansans.

Linda Bass

President, KVC Kansas