

**Testimony by Tim DeWeese, Director of Johnson County Mental Health Center, to the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare in support of House Bill 2033**

***Changing the criteria used to refer and admit juveniles to a juvenile crisis intervention center***

**March 2, 2023**

Chairwoman Gossage and members of the committee, my name is Tim DeWeese, and I serve as the Director of Johnson County Mental Health Center. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today in **support** of HB 2033.

Johnson County Mental Health Center began operating in 1962 by providing outpatient services with four employees in one location. Today, we have over 400 employees in five locations throughout Johnson County providing mental health and substance use treatment services to 12,000 residents annually. We are a department of Johnson County Government, licensed by the State of Kansas as a Community Mental Health Center, and accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International. Last July, we were provisionally certified as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) by the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services.

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony in **support** of this bill which would change the criteria used to refer and admit juveniles to a juvenile crisis intervention center. We believe a juvenile crisis intervention center has a place in our crisis continuum of care for children and their families. To better serve children and families, we propose amending the current law. The term “mental health” crisis is too narrow to adequately respond to the needs of children and families and does not include substance use disorders. Replacing it with the term “behavioral health” encompasses the full spectrum of frequently encountered mental health, substance use, and other dysregulated behavior. The final determination of what constitutes a behavioral health crisis should remain with a qualified and licensed mental health professional based on their clinical judgment.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.