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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas
Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 2236
House Committee on Health and Human Services
March 4, 2025

Chairman Carpenter and Members of the Committee:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2236. BCBSKS is the state's largest local, not-for-profit, mutual insurance company with more than 1,700 Kansas-based employees. We proudly serve over 900,000 Kansans across 103 counties, and we maintain offices in 11 communities around the state.

BCBSKS is focused on improving access to high quality, affordable behavioral health care for all Kansans, not just our own members. We know that nationally, nearly half of youth have experienced a mental health condition, and early intervention is essential to prevent crises and worse health outcomes. We also know that adults with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) experience worse health outcomes and require more costly care than adults without ACEs, and those poor health outcomes drive up healthcare costs for all Americans. Put simply, addressing children's behavioral health needs early is not just about doing the right thing, it's about making health care more affordable today and tomorrow.

BCBSKS covers medically necessary behavioral healthcare services for our members in school settings, so long as that care is not being delivered as part of an IEP, by a school employee, or otherwise is already paid for by the school. As a result, we do not waste premium dollars by duplicating payment for services. We also cover medically necessary behavioral health services for children outside of the school setting.

Our challenge in connecting our youngest members with care is that, as a payor, we don't always know which children are in need of that care. The Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) helps to close that gap by identifying school-age children who need behavioral health support and connecting those children to the care they need. A successful MHIT program will lead to more Kansas children receiving timely, high quality behavioral healthcare. We encourage the committee to recommend this bill favorably for passage.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Fertig". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Fertig
Director of Government Relations
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas