

KANSAS MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

An Organization Dedicated to Improving the Lives of Kansans with Mental Illnesses

Testimony presented to the House Health and Human Services Committee Support HB 2236 – Mental Health Intervention Teams (MHIT)

Amy A. Campbell – March 4, 2025

Chair Carpenter and Members of the Committee:

Please support HB 2236 to establish the mental health intervention team program (MHIT) in the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services in state statute and providing incentives for coordination between school districts, qualified schools and mental health intervention team providers. The current program includes public and private schools as passed in 2024. This important program was begun in 2018, yet it continues to be authorized through budget proviso. Under MHIT, the school district employs school-based liaisons (SBLs) who identify students needing intense behavioral health services and link them to partnering local mental health providers (MHPs) who work closely with the district throughout the school year to provide screening, treatment and foster relationships to ultimately benefit students and families.

The creation of MHIT responded to the increased number of students and families needing behavioral health services AND remove barriers that made it difficult to link students with effective mental health support. The pilot proviso authorized nine school districts to enter into agreements with their local community mental health centers to provide school-based services. The latest KDADS report states the program serves 130 schools and partners with 20 CCBHCs, several Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and private providers. The partners link services into the school buildings to reduce time away from the classroom, provide after-hours resources and maximize the use of mental health professionals through partnerships – reducing competition for those professionals. Each MHIT participating school selects their preferred mental health provider(s).

Mental Health Providers participating in the MHIT program must:

- **Provide 24/7 access to crisis coordination** and emergency response services;
- Work with the school liaison and clinical therapist to identify students and triage priorities for treatment;
- Provide outreach to students, families and child welfare contacts to help engage in treatment;
- Participate in the treatment planning process;
- Help maintain communication between all entities, including the family, student, school, clinical therapist, child welfare contacts and the community;
- Maintain the treatment plan and necessary treatment protocols required by the mental health intervention team provider;
- Make referrals to appropriate community resources;
- Help reconnect students and families when they are not following through with the treatment process;
- Engage with the student in the classroom, the home or the community to help build skills wherever needed.

Please pass HB 2236 and continue to require that schools and providers must meet minimum program requirements to be eligible to utilize MHIT funds and meet the objectives of this innovative program.

Thank you for your consideration.

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