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Heather Braum, Senior Policy Advisor
Kansas Action for Children
Written-only Proponent Testimony on HB 2236
House Committee on Health and Human Services

Chairman Carpenter and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of HB 2236, which would codify the mental health intervention team (MHIT) into state law. We are very supportive of the pilot MHIT program and applaud its successes.

Since its initial implementation in 2018 through a budget proviso (and in each fiscal year since), the MHIT program has helped students and families navigate mental health services and break down barriers in place for youth to receive mental health services, particularly in school settings.¹ The MHIT program has grown significantly since it was first implemented in 2018.²

Now in its seventh year, the program reaches more than 100 public school districts and private schools,³ and has reached over 15,000 students since the program first began in 2018.⁴ The statistics of the program speak for itself; the program is saving kids' lives and changing the trajectory of their lives.

The program reaches many areas of the state⁵ – but needs to continue expanding into more of the state's school districts.

¹ Calvert, J. (2024). *Mental Health Intervention Team Grant, presentation to Robert G. (Bob) Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight*. https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte jt robert g bob bethell joint committee 1/documents/testimony/20240202_18.pdf

² Kansas Legislative Research Department. (2024). *Mental Health Intervention Team Pilot Program*. https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte jt robert g bob bethell joint committee 1/documents/testimony/20240202_21.pdf

³ KDADS. (2025). *Mental Health Intervention Team Annual Report to the 2025 Legislature*.

⁴ KDADS. (February 27, 2025). *Mental Health Intervention Team Program presentation to the House Health and Human Services Committee*. https://www.kslegislature.gov/li/b2025_26/committees/ctte h hhs 1/misc documents/download testimony/ctte h hhs 1 20250227_02_testimony.html

⁵ Calvert, J. (2024). *Kansas School Districts Participating in the Mental Health Initiative Team Program School Year 2023-2024*. https://kslegislature.org/li/b2023_24/committees/ctte jt robert g bob bethell joint committee 1/documents/testimony/20240202_19.pdf

The MHIT program removes numerous barriers to mental health care that negatively impact kids' lives by keeping kids in the classroom to keep learning. They only need to leave class for appointments — not missing hours of class time outside of the building. By receiving care inside the school building, students don't miss valuable class time driving to and from appointments, parents don't have to take time off work to take their kids to appointments, and the care is available year-round.

The MHIT program has existed for seven years as a budget proviso, and its overwhelming success and growth proves it is time for the program to be permanently codified. **This is a program that works for Kansas kids.**

Ultimately, we want kids and their families to access mental health care when they need it and wherever they are at. The MHIT program provides a way to make this a reality for all Kansas kids. It is rare that a program can point to such strong success, growth, positive outcomes, and lifelong trajectory changes.

We urge this Committee to pass out HB 2236 and permanently codify the MHIT program into state law. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at heather@kac.org.

About Kansas Action for Children

Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. We work across the political spectrum to improve the lives of Kansas children through bipartisan advocacy, partnership, and information-sharing on key issues, including early learning and education, health, and economic security for families.