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**Testimony in Support of Increased Access to Mental Health Services for Kansas Students**

**To the Honorable Chairman Goetz, Vice Chair Hill, Ranking Member Winn and members of the House K-12 Education Budget Committee:**

I am pleased to offer this written testimony on behalf of Hazel Health and to advocate for the critical need to expand access to mental health services for Kansas students. As you are aptly aware, the youth mental health crisis is a serious concern, and while Kansas has taken many strides toward addressing the crisis, we believe integrating Hazel Health into the Kansas ecosystem will benefit children greatly.

**Hazel Health** is the nation's largest and most trusted provider of telehealth to the preK-12 population. Throughout the last ten years, Hazel has demonstrated the positive impact of providing virtual healthcare for students—addressing both physical and mental health challenges in real-time and removing many barriers to care such as lack of access to care. Nationwide, Hazel is available to about six (6) million students in seventeen (17) states.

After obtaining parental consent, Hazel's school-centered telehealth model directly connects students with licensed mental health professionals through virtual therapy sessions—right at school or at home and at no out of pocket cost for the family. Our model eliminates the barriers traditionally faced by families, such as transportation challenges, long wait times, and out-of-pocket costs.

Hazel's services are not duplicative of other state-funded mental health programs, such as Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT). Instead, Hazel extends the state's capacity by providing support to students in areas MHIT cannot currently provide help.

I am pleased to present a partnership opportunity between the state of Kansas, Hazel Health and a philanthropic organization. This partnership opportunity aims to serve 183,000 Kansas students with high-quality mental health care, leveraging a combination of state funding (\$2 million) and a generous philanthropic contribution.

### **Key Features of the Program:**

Hazel Health's programs have demonstrated significant improvements in both student mental health and academic performance. Here are some key outcomes:

- **75% reduction in anxiety and depression** after an average of only six sessions, with **70% of students scoring below the clinical threshold** for anxiety and depression after the program.
- **60% reduction in absenteeism** post-therapy, meaning students are attending school more regularly and receiving the education they deserve.
- **50% reduction in disciplinary action** post-therapy, indicating that improved mental health can directly contribute to a decrease in behavioral issues.

This program offers a significant opportunity to:

- **Improve the mental health and well-being of Kansas students by providing evidence-based care.** Hazel Health delivers clinically proven teletherapy programs with a focus on positive outcomes for students.
- **Reduce the impact of the youth mental health crisis by providing care that is accessible to all - with no cost being passed down to the family.** The program removes financial barriers for families, regardless of insurance coverage.
- **Enhance academic performance and overall student success and significantly reduce chronic absenteeism with Hazel's school-based approach.** Our program seamlessly integrates with existing school systems, complementing existing mental health initiatives, such as MHIT.
- **Strengthen the state's commitment to the mental health of its young people.**

I urge this committee to support the allocation of \$2 million in state funding to this critical initiative. By investing in the mental health of our children, we are investing in the future of Kansas.

**Thank you for your time.**

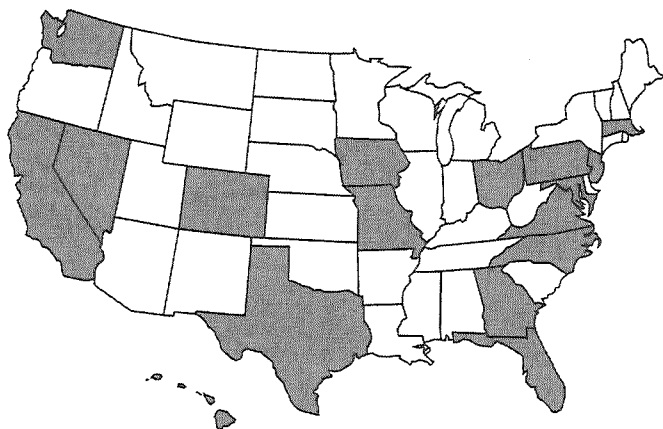


# Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders *with School-Centered Telehealth Services*

Hazel Health is the nation's largest and most trusted school-centered telehealth provider. We bridge schools, families, and healthcare to put opportunity where it belongs: within reach of every child.

## The Most Accessible Care for All Students

Our services are provided at no out-of-pocket cost to all students in our school districts—regardless of insurance coverage.



**17**  
states

**5.1M+**  
students

**5,130+**  
schools

**240+**  
on-staff providers that  
reflect the communities  
they serve and speak 21+  
languages

## Empowering Learning Outcomes

Our services help keep students in class and engaged.

Hazel Health provides a sustainable model for increasing access and engagement with healthcare to improve outcomes across a child's lifetime. It proves what's possible when high-quality care is centered where students spend the most time—in school and at home.

See the next page for additional information →

**92%**

of students return to class after a physical health visit (adding up to over 410,100 hours of recovered learning)<sup>1</sup>

**60%**

reduction in absenteeism post-therapy<sup>2</sup>

**50%**

of students saw a reduction in disciplinary action post-therapy<sup>3</sup>



## School-Centered Mental Health: Intervening When It Matters Most

Nearly one in five children experience mental health challenges, yet 80% of them go untreated.<sup>4</sup> To close this gap, we've partnered with school districts to provide *all* students barrier-free access to Hazel's signature teletherapy program — which was found in a third-party study to drive clinically significant outcomes for student mental health.

	Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment
<b>Depression (PHQ-9)</b>		
Average Severity Score	11.3 (Moderate)	7.4 (Mild)
Percent of Participants in Clinical Range for Depression (Score $\geq 10$ )	60%	33%
<b>Anxiety (GAD-7)</b>		
Average Severity Score	10.6 (Moderate)	7.0 (Mild)
Percent of Participants in Clinical Range for Anxiety (Score $\geq 10$ )	60%	31%

**75%**

of students experienced reductions in anxiety and depression after an average of six sessions<sup>5</sup>

**70%**

of students scored below the clinical threshold for anxiety and depression after the program<sup>6</sup>

**84%**

of families reported noticing a positive change in their child's mental well-being<sup>7</sup>

With an **average intake of 11-years-old**, we've proven that our school-centered healthcare model can reach children in their key developmental window, when treatment is most effective. Early intervention can bend a child's life trajectory to maximize their success potential — from school to post-secondary attainment, into their career, and beyond.

**We anticipate a 15:1 ROI in the short term, and a 100:1 ROI over a child's lifetime based on independent third-party analysis by MCRA.**

**To learn more, contact:**

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1. "Hazel Health Physical Health Visit Report." Hazel Health, 2024, Internal.

2. Monica Obradovic, "Attendance Up Since Pandemic, but Many St. Louis-Area Kids Are Still Skipping School," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 9, 2024, [https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/attendance-up-since-pandemic-but-many-st-louis-area-kids-are-still-skipping-school/article\\_f6372f46-b28b-11ef-a5db-ebd32d9cdacc.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/education/attendance-up-since-pandemic-but-many-st-louis-area-kids-are-still-skipping-school/article_f6372f46-b28b-11ef-a5db-ebd32d9cdacc.html).

3. "Improving Access to Children's Mental Health Care." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 8 Mar. 2023, [www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/access.html](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/access.html).

4. Williams, Edwards, Ph.D. "Hazel Health, Inc. HEART Protocol Executive Summary." Clemson University Center for Behavioral Analysis, 2024

5. Williams, Edwards, Ph.D. "Hazel Health, Inc. HEART Protocol Executive Summary." Clemson University Center for Behavioral Analysis, 2024

6. "Hazel Health Family Satisfaction Survey." Hazel Health, 2024, Internal.