

Members of the Social Services Budget Committee,

My name is Katie Small and I'm an owner and founder of JST Therapy located in Wichita. Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee about the importance of Peer Services and the need to put some limits and regulations on them in our Medicaid system for accountability.

Peer Support Services play an integral role in the continuum of care, providing individuals with lived experience the ability to support others navigating similar challenges. However, without clear standards and guardrails, there is a risk of inconsistent service delivery, inefficiencies in Medicaid spending, and a lack of accountability in ensuring that these services yield meaningful outcomes. The proposed statutes introduce much-needed safeguards, including third-party certification expansion, enhanced training availability, and structured background checks, ensuring that Kansas has a well-trained, vetted workforce delivering quality Peer Support Services.

Additionally, the proposed regulations address important areas such as tele-health for accessibility, emergency preparedness, and utilization caps. These provisions not only align Kansas with national best practices in states like Minnesota, Arkansas, and Missouri but also encourage fiscal responsibility by balancing reimbursement rates with service demand. The introduction of utilization caps, with a reasonable threshold and prior authorization process, ensures that Medicaid dollars are allocated effectively while still allowing individuals with higher needs to access extended services when medically necessary.

By passing these statutes, Kansas can establish a system that supports responsible Medicaid spending by clearly defining guidelines that are not currently in place while also prioritizing access to quality mental health services without having to allocate any additional funding. These guardrails promote efficiency, accountability, and long-term stability, ensuring that Peer Support Services remain a sustainable and impactful component of our state's mental health infrastructure. I urge the committee to support this proposal as a step toward strengthening Kansas Medicaid and fostering a system that is both financially sound and responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries. I've personally seen the tremendous outcomes being achieved through this important service and the results are very strongly supported by empirical peer reviewed data as well. In order to ensure this valuable service remains a tool going forward, it's important that we do so with clear guidelines, oversight, and accountability.

Thank you again.

Katie Small