



Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.

222 SW 7th, Topeka, KS 66603

Telephone (785) 234-4773 Fax (785) 234-3189

www.acmhck.org

Testimony to House Social Services Budget Committee on HB 2314

February 12, 2025

Chairman Buehler and members of the Committee, my name is Kyle Kessler, and I am the Executive Director of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. The Association represents the 26 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas that provide behavioral health services in all 105 counties, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. In Kansas, CMHCs are the local Mental Health Authorities coordinating the delivery of publicly funded community-based mental health services. As part of licensing regulations, CMHCs are required to provide services to all Kansans needing them, regardless of their ability to pay. This makes the community mental health system the “safety net” for Kansans with mental health needs.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on HB 2314.

The CMHCs are the backbone of the mental health safety net in our state. CMHCs provide outpatient services to patients living with severe and persistent mental illness and children/youth with severe emotional disturbance. CMHCs provide individuals the opportunity to improve their quality of life while continuing to remain in the community, in the least restrictive environment possible.

Our testimony today comes to you with more questions than answers as it relates to HB 2314. CMHCs are one of the largest providers of peer support services in Kansas, and we are having a hard time understanding the need for this bill, or what problems it is seeking to address.

We are not necessarily defending the status quo as it relates to peer support services, but we would certainly welcome a conversation with the proponents of the bill to better understand how this bill will improve the landscape for providing these services. Absent that discussion, we remain puzzled as to the motives of the bill and would ask that the Committee study this issue before any action is taken.

We would be glad to work with all interested parties regarding peer support services and we remain committed to public policy that best serves the individuals that rely on our services.