



**Proponent Testimony – SB 414
Senate Committee on Judiciary
February 3, 2026**

Chair Warren, Vice Chair Titus, Ranking Member Corson and Members of the committee, Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 414. My name is Kristalle Hedrick, I serve as the CEO with the Children's Alliance of Kansas, the statewide association representing private nonprofit providers delivering child welfare services across the state.

The Children's Alliance of Kansas strongly supports this legislation, which would authorize funding from the state's Evidence-Based Programs Account to be used for licensed residential facilities providing behavioral health crisis intervention services to juveniles. This represents an important step toward opening up funding and strengthening supports for a variety of treatment options for youth experiencing behavioral health crises.

Youth with behavioral health needs — including mental health challenges, trauma responses, and substance use concerns — require a continuum of care that meets them where they are and provides timely, appropriate supports. Too often, children with complex needs do not access the services they need early, which contributes to crisis escalation, deeper system involvement, and the use of more restrictive placements. SB 414 helps address this by authorizing funding for facilities that offer short-term observation, assessment, treatment, case planning, and referrals for juveniles in crisis, including access to medical, psychiatric, psychological, social, educational, and substance abuse-related services.

This bill is consistent with the Children's Alliance's longstanding advocacy for expanding community-based and crisis intervention services so that families have meaningful options beyond detention and traditional institutional placement. Evidence shows that providing behavioral health supports early and in the least restrictive setting improves outcomes for youth, reduces recidivism, and supports families, communities, and taxpayers alike.

We also want to highlight the specific needs of juvenile offenders and crossover youth — children who are dually involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems or are at risk of entering foster care due to unmet behavioral health needs. These young people often have significant trauma histories and complex clinical needs, and they are among the



most vulnerable to poor outcomes when services are delayed or unavailable. We support the core concepts around juvenile justice reform, as we saw with SB 367 in 2016, such as reducing unnecessary detention, expanding alternatives to confinement, and reinvesting in evidence-based community services. However, nearly a decade after SB 367, a true statewide continuum of care for youth with behavioral health needs has not been fully built out. There remain gaps in crisis response, short-term stabilization, step-down services, and community supports that can keep families together and reduce justice and child welfare involvement.

By expanding funding flexibility for crisis intervention and residential mental health treatment, SB 414 moves us closer to the kind of comprehensive array of services that children and families deserve — ensuring that Kansas invests in solutions that are therapeutic, evidence informed, and oriented toward long-term success.

For these reasons, the Children's Alliance of Kansas respectfully urges the Committee to support the passage of SB 414. I'm happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Kristalle Hedrick

A business card for Kristalle Hedrick, LMSW, Chief Executive Officer of Children's Alliance of Kansas. The card features a circular portrait of Kristalle Hedrick on the left. To the right of the portrait, her name and title are listed, followed by contact information: address (627 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka KS 66603), phone number (785) 764-7465, email (khedrick@childally.org), and website (www.childally.org). The Children's Alliance of Kansas logo is positioned to the right of the contact information. Below the logo is a circular seal that reads "CERTIFIED SWAPP LEADER". At the bottom of the card, the text "Individualization | Relator | Strategic | Futuristic | Responsibility" is displayed.