

**Written Proponent (with suggested amendment) Testimony to
Senate Committee on Judiciary**

Senate Bill 414: Authorizing the secretary of corrections to enter into a memorandum of understanding to provide money from the evidence-based programs account to residential facilities with behavioral health crisis intervention services for juveniles

February 3, 2026

Chair Warren, Vice Chair Titus, Ranking Minority Member Corson, and Members of the Committee, I am writing as the Child Advocate with the Office of the Child Advocate as a proponent (with suggested amendment) on Senate Bill 414 authorizing the secretary of corrections to enter into a memorandum of understanding to provide money from the evidence-based programs account to residential facilities with behavioral health crisis intervention services for juveniles.

The purpose of the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) is to act as a neutral, independent agency to ensure that children and families receive adequate coordination of child welfare services for child protection and care through services offered by the Department for Children and Families or the department's contracting entities, the Department for Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Health and Environment and juvenile courts. OCA receives and responds to complaints regarding state agencies, service providers, and juvenile courts that adversely affect the health, safety, and wellbeing of children. Through case and systemic recommendations, OCA seeks impact for best practices, policies, and law.

The 2025 OCA Annual Report contained a narrative titled "The Intersection of Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice" based on concerns received from foster care case management providers, foster home placements, law enforcement, and other community stakeholders about the current landscape for young people exhibiting criminogenic behaviors, as well as experiencing a behavioral health crisis. OCA has received a range of concerns regarding services and options for youth caught in this intersection; however, many concerns relate to placement options when returning such youth to a caregiver or guardian is not a safe option. Oftentimes a youth experiencing a behavioral health crisis needs a short-term opportunity for assessment, stabilization, and case management to assist in connecting to resources as provided by the juvenile crisis intervention center service model.

OCA strongly supports efforts to remove barriers to disseminating the Juvenile Alternatives Detention Fund, especially when there is a clear need to increase the community-based capacity and service array to meet the needs of young people and their families. OCA encourages efforts

to improve access to early intervention services such as juvenile crisis intervention centers and services.

OCA does believe additional direction and perimeters should be included to specifically address the clause on page 3, beginning on line 36, "...other residential facility licensed by the Kansas department for children and families...that has a program purpose of behavioral health crisis intervention for juveniles." This language aims to remove the barrier previously incorporated in K.S.A. 75-52,164(e)(2), "Child welfare case management providers shall not be eligible to receive grants under this subsection." The language in the bill creates a pathway for child welfare case management providers or other providers that have licensed programs to now access the evidence-based programs account of the state general fund.

OCA proposes language be added to the bill requiring DCF and KDADS develop policies and procedures by which residential facility providers or other licensed programs that have the broadly stated "program purpose of behavioral health crisis intervention for juveniles" can become licensed and approved to provide these specific juvenile crisis intervention services, consistent with existing framework requirements for centers as outlined in the Kansas Laws and Regulations for Juvenile Crisis Intervention Centers.¹

OCA appreciates your time and attention in recognizing the importance of expanding the service array across Kansas in serving families and the young people experiencing a behavioral health crisis.

I am pleased to respond to questions at the appropriate time.

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¹Kansas Department for Children and Families. (2024). Kansas laws and regulations for juvenile crisis intervention centers (JUNE 2024-A).
<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/FCL/Documents/Juvenile%20Crisis%20Intervention%20Center%20Laws%20and%20Regulations%20June%202024-A.pdf>.