



12 November 2019

Special Committee on Medicaid Expansion

Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

The Behavioral Health Association of Kansas (BHAK) is the state's trade organization dedicated solely to substance use disorder treatment and prevention providers seeking integrated behavioral health care. BHAK believes that true integrated behavioral health means access and funding for mental illness and substance use disorder treatment without regard to where a consumer seeks services. Our stakeholders large and small and geographically diverse adhere to the core beliefs of expanding capacity and access, and providing consumer choice in the publicly funded behavioral health system.

BHAK, along with members of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, are offering testimony to voice our full support of the expansion of Medicaid benefits to thousands of eligible Kansans, particularly those who suffer from substance use disorders and accompanying mental illness. Expanded Medicaid will impact the already strained system for providing mental health services and expanded Medicaid coverage will need to include changes in the State's Medicaid system to increase access to services and enhance the capacity of providers in Kansas.

The current Kansas Medicaid State Plan and contracts with managed care companies restricts the provision of mental health services to one provider system only. The restriction of mental health services to only the community mental health center system limits overall system capacity and adequacy, provides a substantial barrier to consumers attempting to access services, prohibits any consumer choice for services, and impacts healthy outcomes for the consumer, the providers, and the State. We are not using all of our tools to address the behavioral health crisis. Medicaid expansion will require the expansion of providers to efficiently handle these new populations. The Kansas system will improve with Medicaid expansion and provider expansion.

We support Medicaid expansion and lament the years of lost resources and citizens who have gone without behavioral health treatment because we have not yet expanded.

Please contact us if you have any additional questions.

Stuart J. Little, Ph.D., President
Behavioral Health Association of Kansas
800 SW Jackson St., Ste. 1100
Topeka, Kansas 66612
785-845-7265 Mobile
<https://www.bhakansas.com>