



Written opponent testimony on

HB 2578

Programs and treatments by CCBHCs

By

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In

House Health and Human Services

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Madam Chair and members of the committee,

KASB appears today in opposition to HB 2578. Our opposition is based on our member-affirmed legislative platform, which calls for: *increased support for the mental health needs of students and staff; improved collaboration across agencies and with the Legislature to support educational outcomes for students in foster care or experiencing homeless, and efforts to address other identified student health and safety issues.*

Kansas public schools have been grappling with the crippling impacts of student mental health challenges for several years. Those challenges were exacerbated by the COVID pandemic and its multiple stresses on the families we partner with. School guidance counselors, school social workers, school psychiatrists, and other school staff do their best to offer children the mental health services they so desperately need. The needs are so great, however, that school districts and families often also establish partnerships with non-school-based mental and behavioral health providers, including **but not limited to** community mental health centers.

KASB is concerned that HB 2578 appears to prioritize providers affiliated with the Association of Community Health Centers over other behavioral health providers in Kansas for designation as a community behavioral health clinic (CBHC). That designation is critical because it carries with it

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the ability to bill Medicaid for behavioral health services, resulting in decreased costs for patients and their families.

KASB is gravely concerned about the impact this might have on students' and families' ability to obtain and afford the mental health services they need, in partnership with local providers. Limiting the number and type of providers who can access Medicaid billing for behavioral health services could have tragic consequences, and we urge the committee to reject HB 2578 unless it is amended to allow a broad range of providers to be designated as CBHCs.

Thank you.