



Proponent Testimony on HB2340 - Written Only
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
March 20, 2023

Chair Gossage, Vice Chair Erickson, Ranking Member Pettey, and Members of the Committee, my name is Rachel Marsh, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 19 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2340 as amended.

Kansas continues to face a significant shortage of behavioral health professionals. This has resulted in lack of staff at psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs), which reduces operational capacity and increases waitlists for foster youth. The lack of professionals further creates gaps in services for children and families as our community partners face the same workforce challenges. These shortages contribute to high caseloads, reduced client treatment contact, and high turnover for therapists, regardless of where they are employed. Kansas's chronic behavioral health workforce shortage negatively impacts children and families in the child welfare system.

We support HB2340 as amended to streamline licensed professionals into the Kansas workforce and build service capacity for children and families in need. HB2340 as amended will:

- 1) Place Kansas in a position to enter compacts with other states
- 2) Attract licensed professionals from out of state
- 3) Encourage Kansas professionals to stay in Kansas

Thank you for your consideration of HB2340 as amended as an important step to addressing the shortage of behavioral health professionals in Kansas.

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Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:

CALM, Emporia
Cornerstones of Care, Kansas City
DCCCA, Lawrence
Eckerd Connects, Wichita
EmberHope, Wichita
Florence Crittenton, Topeka
FosterAdopt Connect, Olathe
Foster the Cause, Topeka
Gathered, Derby
Great Circle, Lawrence

KVC Kansas, Olathe
KidsTLC, Olathe
Restoration Family Services, Wichita
Saint Francis Ministries, Salina
TFI Family Services, Topeka
O'Connell Children's Shelter, Lawrence
The Villages, Topeka
Wichita Children's Home, Wichita
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