



March 18, 2024

Chair Gossage
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Kansas Senate
300 SW 10th Ave, Room 142-S, Topeka, KS 66612

RE: Support for HB 2484 WRITTEN-ONLY

Dear Chair Gossage and members of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare,

On behalf of Integrated Psychiatric Consultants, P.A. (IPC) and Responsive Centers, I write to express support for House Bill 2484. This legislation would enact the social work licensure compact in Kansas and is a positive step forward to expedite the process by which out-of-state licensed social workers can treat in-state patients, and will allow our Kansas-licensed social workers to continue working with their clients more easily. IPC and Responsive Centers respectfully urge the Committee to vote in favor of this bill.

IPC is the largest private psychiatric practice in the State of Kansas and has more than 70 psychiatric providers. Responsive Centers is one of the largest private behavioral health practices in Kansas with nearly 40 clinicians on our team. Together, our providers and clinicians serve thousands of Kansans each year to help address their mental health needs. We work directly with Community Mental Health Centers, Hospitals/Health Systems, Addiction/SUD facilities, Payors, Universities, Psychiatric Inpatient and Residential facilities, Outpatient clinics, FQHCs, Military/First Responders, and many more throughout the State of Kansas. We also work directly with hundreds of medical students, residents, fellows, and nurses to provide training sites and education plus provide internships for social workers and other master's level clinicians and Ph.D./PsyD. clinicians to complete their education and training requirements.

Integrated Psychiatric Consultants (IPC) is a behavioral health staffing and management group which offers end-to-end solutions. Our care team includes board-certified adult psychiatrists, child and adolescent psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, mental health therapists, and other providers. IPC cares for a full spectrum of disorders and conditions through strong community partnerships, optimizing patient-centered care through expert providers specialized in psychiatry, substance use recovery, and therapy and counseling.

IPC takes pride in serving all levels of care (emergency departments, inpatient & residential units, recovery centers, outpatient, etc.) at an affordable rate, improving access to high-quality care providers. Having incorporated telehealth care for nearly two decades, our care providers can work with healthcare organizations of all sizes, serving patients across the lifespan. Utilizing various forms of integrated care models, our care team also works closely with primary care providers to have an impact on the quality of services delivered. In summary, IPC is a one-stop shop for all behavioral health needs.



As a Licensed Master's Social Worker (LMSW) since 2007, I have spent my career as a clinician and an administrator seeking to improve access to behavioral health services in Kansas. I proudly received my undergraduate degree in social work from Fort Hays State University and my graduate degree from the University of Kansas. I have been honored during my career by being nominated by the Kansas Legislature to serve on the past Mental Health Task Force, served as the Chair of the Kansas Hospital Association's Behavioral Health Committee, and provided representation on many statewide committees aimed at serving and enhancing our behavioral health services in Kansas.

Throughout those years and still to this day, the recruitment, hiring, and retention of social workers in the State of Kansas remains a challenge. Reports over the past several years have shown that mental health crises continue to increase among U.S. residents. With this increase, more and more patients turn to virtual and in-person care to seek timely, high-quality behavioral health services. Unfortunately, this increased demand for these services can often surpass the number of available, in-state licensed clinicians who can treat patients in a timely manner. Instituting the social work licensure compact in Kansas is a commonsense measure that will ensure there is a larger pool of available social workers who can work with patients to improve their mental health.

HB 2484 would also allow clinicians to meet the growing demand for virtual care platforms such as IPC's and Responsive Centers' telehealth services to better leverage the workforce of licensed social workers across the nation. It remains our goal to provide Kansas residents with safe, effective, and valuable mental health care where and when they need it. The social workers who use our virtual platform to connect with patients have all met the necessary requirements to be licensed in the states in which they practice. Many of the states in which social workers are licensed have standards that meet or exceed licensing requirements in Kansas. Should this measure be enacted, our platform will be able to leverage our highly qualified base of clinicians to ensure patients have access to timely, meaningful, and affordable behavioral health care.

IPC and Responsive Centers appreciates the opportunity to provide our companies' unique perspective on the efficacy of HB 2484. This legislation is an important step toward expanding the pool of available social workers who can meet the needs of patients across this state. To that end, we respectfully urge the Committee to vote in favor of this bill in a timely manner. I may be reached at rspeier@integrated-pc.com should you have questions, or if IPC or Responsive Centers can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Ryan Speier, LMSW
Chief Operating Officer
Integrated Psychiatric Consultants &
Responsive Centers