

**Testimony by Tim DeWeese, Director of Johnson County Mental Health Center to the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs in support of House Bill 2667**

***Concerning the lottery operating fund, increasing transfers to the community crisis stabilization centers fund and the clubhouse model program fund of the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services***

**February 13, 2024**

Chairman Carpenter and members of the committee, my name is Tim DeWeese, and I serve as the director of Johnson County Mental Health Center. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today in **support** of HB 2667.

Johnson County Mental Health Center began operating in 1962 by providing outpatient services with four employees in one location. Today, we have over 400 employees in five locations providing community-based mental health and substance use treatment services to 12,000 residents annually. We are a department of Johnson County Government, licensed by the State of Kansas as a Community Mental Health Center (CMHC), accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International and certified as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS). JCMHC serves as a safety net for individuals with the most severe forms of mental illness, as well as those who are unable to afford or access care elsewhere in our community.

Additionally, JCMHC works closely with Wyandot Behavioral Health Network to utilize crisis stabilization services through RSI, a crisis stabilization center in Wyandotte County that also serves individuals from Johnson County. The connection includes a JCMHC clinician who serves as a liaison to RSI.

Along with programs like around-the-clock crisis lines, mobile crisis teams, and co-responders, crisis stabilization centers, like RSI, play an important role in the continuum of crisis services we provide to our communities. They are an option for treatment that prevents a person experiencing a mental health crisis from needing an unnecessary—and more costly for the community—hospitalization or interaction with law enforcement and provides that person with a connection to community-based services for further care and support when their symptoms are stabilized.

Increased funding for these centers is particularly critical as we continue to see a growing need for crisis services in Johnson County. Since the mechanism for using these revenues was established in 2018, JCMHC's annual number of crisis calls and contacts has increased 77% from 31,762 in 2018 to 56,368 in 2022.

Because the cap increase in this bill will help support and sustain crisis programs that address the rising demand for crisis services in our communities and reduce hospitalizations and law enforcement interactions for people with serious mental illnesses, Johnson County Mental Health Center supports HB 2667 and asks the members of the committee to recommend its passage.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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