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HB 2444 – Establishing the school district mental health intervention team program in statute to provide coordinated mental health services for students among school districts and community mental health centers.

Neutral, Written-Only Testimony

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Chairwoman Williams and Members of the Committee,

The Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services (KDADS) welcomes the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2444.

KDADS is very supportive of the mental health intervention team (MHIT) program as the pilot has shown to break down barriers in place for our youth to receive mental health services. According to a Wichita State University study, MHIT team members consistently responded that they have seen a reduction in the stigma of mental health services, improvement in outcomes for students, better coordination of care for students, and improved communication regarding students.

While the Kansas State Department for Education administers the MHIT program, KDADS is the designated state agency for mental health services and routinely work with a number of existing statewide behavioral health system and resources within the mental health provider network. Many mental health providers do work for Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC), but it is our understanding that there are districts already participating in the MHIT pilot program utilizing providers that are not associated with a CMHC. This allows more students to access mental health services. KDADS is neutral on the bill only because we are concerned that limiting providers to those associated with a CMHC would limit the capacity of the MHIT program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input as this bill goes through the legislative process.

Respectfully,

Andrew Brown  
Behavioral Health Commissioner, KDADS