

TESTIMONY BY RICHARD SHANK OF HUTCHINSON REPRESENTING ALLIANCE FOR KANSANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

TO: Chairman Bob Bethell and members of the Aging and long Term Care Committee

GOOD MORNING, I AM RICHARD SHANK APPEARING ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE FOR KANSANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

DURING THE PAST YEAR, IT HAS BEEN MY GOOD FORTUNE TO WORK WITH THE ALLIANCE AND, IN PARTICULAR ON ISSUES INVOLVED IN RESTORING CUTS THAT WERE MADE TO THE MEDICAID BUDGET IN 2010.

THE ALLIANCE IS MADE UP OF ORGANIZATIONS IN 15 COMMUNITIES THAT PROVIDE CARE FOR HUNDREDS OF KANSANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

FIRST, LET ME THANK CHAIRMAN BETHELL AND THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR THEIR TIRELESS EFFORTS DURING THE 2010 SESSION TO RESTORE FUNDS TO THE MEDICAID BUDGET.

IT SEEMS THAT MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE A LACK OF FUNDING TO NOT ONLY SERVES OUR CLIENTS BUT TO EMPLOY THE PROFESSIONALS NEEDED TO OPERATE THESE ORGANIZATIONS.

IN TRAVELING THROUGHOUT KANSAS TO ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT WITH CONSUMERS SERVED AND THE PROFESSIONALS WHO SUPPORT THEM. THOSE RECEIVING SERVICES MAINTAIN A HAPPY AND HEALTHY OUTLOOK ON LIFE, DUE IN LARGE PART TO THE GREAT LEADERSHIP OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DIRECT SUPPORT

HOUSE AGING & LTC

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PROFESSIONALS WHO PROVIDE THE SERVICES. MANY OF THE CONSUMERS HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS THAT REQUIRE 24 HOURS PER DAY OF HIGHLY TRAINED CARE.

DUE TO INSUFFICIENT FUNDING, WAITING LISTS REMAIN A MAJOR PROBLEM AND A NUMBER OF THE THOSE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ARE BEING CARED FOR BY AGING PARENTS.

AND, AS YOU KNOW, THE FAMILY'S HEALTH INSURANCE, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, FAILS TO PROVIDE MORE THAN ROUTINE MEDICAL NEEDS.

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THIS ORGANIZATION AND, PERPHAPS, ALL THE ORGNAIZATIONS IN THIS ROOM TODAY.

THE ALLIANCE IS AWARE OF A PROVIDER ASSESSMENT THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED DURING THE 2011 SESSION AND FEEL THAT THE IDEA HAS MERIT. WE ARE RESEARCHING THE ISSUE TO DETERMINE IF THIS MIGHT BE A LONG TERM SOLUTION TO FUNDING OUR ORGANIZATIONS.

THANK YOU CHAIRMAN BETHELL AND THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR YOUR PAST SUPPORT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU DURING THE 2011 SESSION AND ARE HOPEFUL THAT WE CAN FIND SOLUTIONS TO ASSIST THIS SPECIAL GROUP OF CITIZENS WHO ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY.

Richard Shank, Hutchinson, Governmental Affairs, Alliance for Kansans with Developmental Disabilities (shankr@prodigy.net) (620-664-1517)