



Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.

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Testimony to House Health and Human Services Committee on House Bill 2025

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Mister Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Mike Hammond and I serve as the Executive Director of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. The Association appreciates the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of HB 2025, creating the Joint Committee on KanCare Oversight.

The Association represents the 27 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas who provide home and community-based, as well as outpatient mental health services in all 105 counties in Kansas, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. In Kansas, CMHCs are the local Mental Health Authorities coordinating the delivery of publicly funded community-based mental health services. As part of licensing regulations, CMHCs are required to provide services to all Kansans needing them, regardless of their ability to pay. This makes the community mental health system the “safety net” for Kansans with mental health needs, collectively serving over 127,000 Kansans with mental illness.

As you are aware, KanCare is an ambitious approach to improve care coordination and reduce fragmentation across programs. The end result will be improved overall health outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries while slowing the growth of Medicaid expenditures. This is accomplished while preserving Medicaid rates, eligibility, and benefits. We agree that the path we are on today is not sustainable. This is an important policy direction for the State of Kansas that has received, and should continue to receive meaningful attention.

Of course the devil is in the detail, and that detail is unfolding now through implementation of 3 separate MCO contracts. No matter how well you plan for systems transformation, there inevitably will be struggles, challenges, and problems along the way. Ensuring there is adequate and effective oversight in the Executive Branch as well as the Legislative Branch is critical. With that oversight, we are hopeful Kansas can avoid the mistakes of other States, and if not avoid them entirely, make the necessary adjustments during implementation to minimize negative outcomes on Kansans.

In the end, access to care when it is needed and at the right amount is paramount. We will remain strong in our advocacy to ensure that continues to occur in the new world of managed care.

The Association and its members urge you to report out favorably HB 2025 for passage. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.