



March 10, 2022

TO: Chair Finch and Members of the House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications

FR: Nick Wood, Associate Director, InterHab

RE: Substitute for HB 2281

Chair Finch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share information on behalf of the member organizations of InterHab. Our members serve Kansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities in every part of the state.

In my role at InterHab, I work with our Complex Needs Task Force to examine issues within the IDD system and develop a knowledge base of national best practices and policy recommendations to help improve services to Kansas with IDD who present with significant medical, behavioral or age-related conditions. We want to thank the committee for taking this challenge on. The needs of I/DD system are unique within the larger world behavioral health. The implementation of statewide crisis services for will have a major impact on the system.

The Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform highlighted that individuals with I/DD who have co-occurring disorders are not adequately served within the behavioral health system currently. This is partially due to challenges with finding providers who can address both behavioral health issues and I/DD, but also underfunding of the I/DD waiver. A current lack of services to support individuals with I/DD within the behavioral health system, which causes parents and families to seek out services provided under other waivers as a last resort. Further, this lack of services has led to some children entering the foster care system, because they are unable to receive the level of supports needed to remain at home, and this lack of services is often not resolved by entering foster care. These issues are exacerbated by workforce issues within the I/DD system, which could partially be addressed through increase reimbursement rates.

988 Implementation

988 is a national three-digit number that all telecom companies will be required to implement, similar to 911, for people in a mental or behavioral health crisis which planned for July of 2022.

Most callers to 988 will likely not need additional crisis services beyond what is delivered, but for those that do, having a statewide Mobile Crisis Response system would allow the dispatch of an on-call qualified mental health professional or IDD support professional for crisis intervention. Those services would be provided in the community in less than an hour in most areas. Some callers may still require LEO or EMS dispatch.

Statewide Crisis Support Program

The system improvement we want to work on should result in the ability to implement Cross System Crisis Intervention services for individuals served, which would provide the tools needed to support an individual through crisis. Specially trained community-based staff should be available to provide individual or disability

specific trainings to teams. Crisis intervention services should be implemented in the context of a comprehensive, systems linkage approach, to improve capacity in the entire system.

1. System-wide crisis prevention and intervention training. Training for clinicians, crisis responders, and front-line staff should be competency-based and adaptable to differing levels of practice experience and formal education. Existing training resources could be implemented in order to meet this need.

2. Develop specialized service delivery programs modeled after evidence-based practices from other states. Kansas should also adopt a best practice, system of care approach toward crisis intervention for Kansans with intellectual disabilities or Autism in crisis. A system of care approach could include:

- Prevention Services - provide wellness checks and identify ways to help people work through potential crisis.
- Crisis Telephone Services - available 24/7 to provide information, referral, and action plan development.
- Mobile Crisis Outreach Services - provided on-site wherever needed.
- In-Home Crisis Services - assist people to become stabilized in their home.
- Crisis Residential Services - provide very short-term, highly supportive and supervised residential settings.

3. Ongoing system-level Research and Training Team.

An ongoing research and training program is vital to the overall success of a crisis services program. It is the basis for which we can begin to finally study system needs in real-time, and coordinate the direct services needed to ensure people can get the services they need when and where they need it. A successful research and training program should build on the existing service infrastructure and add the expertise and analysis needed to help with prevention activities and knowledge dissemination. We see this program as a community-based collaboration among the variety of professionals who already provide support for behavioral health needs in Kansas.

We would like to thank the members of the committee for your work to support 988 implementation. We look forward to a Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline program that will save lives, prevent trauma, and take pressure off other first responders like EMS and law enforcement. We look forward to working with you and the other stakeholders to make it the best program it can be.