

February 23, 2021

Brenda Landwehr, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: HB 2373 An act establishing mobile crisis services for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

Dear Chairwoman and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today in support of HB 2373. My name is Shelly May, and I am the Deputy Director at Johnson County Developmental Supports (JCDS.) I have worked in the IDD field in Kansas for over 30 years and have seen the increasingly complex support needs of individuals coming into service through crisis exceptions, and the disconnect that often occurs when people need services from both the IDD system and mental health. People with IDD tend to experience mental illness at a higher rate than the general population. Our numbers in Johnson County indicate that about 45% of the individuals we support have a diagnosis of mental illness. As a system, we are seeing more substance abuse, criminal activity and interaction with law enforcement.

I spoke with you last year about a potential model for mobile crisis services from Johnson County Government known as the Community Behavioral Health Team (CBHT.) Initially piloted and now in operation, it is a cross-functional team with Johnson County Mental Health (JCMH) and JCDS to provide positive behavioral supports to individuals with IDD who also experience a co-occurring mental health diagnosis or dual diagnosis. CBHT staff identify and address the developmental and mental health barriers that interfere with daily living, teach coping skills and increase social skills to develop healthy relationships. Services may be offered in the community where the individual lives, works, socializes, attends school, or receives day and residential services. This unique relationship allows the services to be billed through JCMH, where clinical supervision is provided, while being operated day-to-day by JCDS.

Woven throughout the CBHT program is the philosophy of positive behavioral supports (PBS) and looking past the behavior to treat the whole person. PBS is an intensive service to teach alternative response strategies, interventions and replacement behaviors. Part of the role of the CBHT is to provide training to providers affiliated with the Community Developmental Disabilities Organization (CDDO) in Johnson County and families in crisis. Critical training is needed on trauma informed care and reversing consequence-based thinking which leads to power struggles, restricting rights and reinforcing negative behaviors.

I want to provide a quick case study of a 14-year-old girl with Autism, living in the family home and struggling at home and school and exhibiting extremely physically aggressive behavior. CBHT provided training to the family on Autism, PBS and family therapy. Parents were resistive and quick to punish and take away things. They had a win/lose mentality and even minor disagreements were a battle. With persistence in teaching the parents how to communicate, follow positive behavior support plans, and allow their teenaged daughter to help create

schedules and earn privileges, she has returned to regular public school, and there has been no aggressive behavior at home for over 90 days.

In order to accomplish the work of CBHT, JCDS employs three full time behavioral health specialists who provide case management services under the clinical supervision of JCMH. JCMH dedicates a therapist to CBHT who understands both service systems and can provide individual and family therapy. Support from CBHT is available to any resident of Johnson County who is five years of age or older, determined IDD eligible thru the CDDO and qualifies for treatment through JCMH. The team serves about 60 individuals per year and offers training to their families and service providers. Many times, the individuals who come to CBHT have been kicked out of school, are disrupting the family home, gone through multiple service providers, and/or interacted with law enforcement. For younger individuals in the family home, in home family therapy and supports are a critical need.

CBHT has been very successful in helping individuals to move forward in their lives. The work is very intensive – at times case management and therapy services are needed almost daily. They have helped kids to return to school and to their family home, reduced and even eliminated police involvement, reduced use of restraint and medications to manage people, and helped people experience a meaningful life and maintain positive relationships. Not every case is a success story, but data demonstrates individual health and wellbeing improve as a result of CBHT's involvement.

Another case example involved a woman in her 20's with dual diagnosis who lived at home with her mother and brother. She was the highest user of 911 services in all Overland Park. She was also constantly calling the crisis hotline, involved in very risky behavior and a frequent user of the emergency room. She was arrested several times for making false claims, misuse and abuse of 911 and was facing jail time. CBHT became involved and provided case management and therapy 4-5 times per week. They helped the woman develop coping strategies, teaching replacement behaviors and reinforcing positive behaviors, and provided lots of training and structure to the family. It's been over a year since her last 911 call. She does still call the crisis line, but it is an appropriate use of that service.

In closing, we have seen benefits in Johnson County to providing these types of intervention services supported by HB 2373. A statewide response is desperately needed to address the increasing demands on the IDD system to support individuals in crisis with challenging behavior and complex support needs.

Thank you, and I would be happy to stand for questions.

Shelly May, Deputy Director
Johnson County Developmental Supports