



March 24, 2021

**Senate Ways and Means Committee
Testimony in Support of SB 264:
Kansas Fights Addictions Act**

Chairman Billinger and Members of the Committee,

The Behavioral Health Association of Kansas (BHAK) is the state's trade organization dedicated solely to substance use disorder treatment and prevention providers seeking integrated behavioral health care. BHAK believes that true integrated behavioral health means access and funding for mental illness and substance use disorder treatment without regard to where a consumer seeks services. We appreciate the growing awareness of how substance use disorder affects our lives. State investment of resources in treatment impacts health care, employment, public safety, child welfare, and we support your investment of resources.

COVID disrupted the delivery of behavioral health of services. We can hardly imagine how the same disruptions impacted the individuals we serve. Telemedicine was a blessing, and CARES Act funds managed some of the direct pandemic response expenses. What we need now is funding and stability to serve those still living in, emerging from, and are yet to suffer crisis. Increased substance usage, combined with the long-standing stimulants and opioid situation, warrant our support Senate Bill 264.

The bill establishes a mechanism to target these and future settlement funds to the key need: treatment and prevention while not allowing these funds to diminish services by prohibiting supplanting. We're also pleased that the Senate Bill 123 program may be included as an option provided supplanting is prohibited.

Finally, I would note one issue of concern

- 2 (g) excludes for-profit treatment providers from participating. That is a policy choice for you all. I would note substance use disorder treatment is not a financially rewarding business. For-profit and non-profit organizations are both working the front line of SUD treatment in both the public and insurance funded systems. A possible solution would be to add "state licensed treatment programs" to the definition of qualified providers. We need all providers addressing this issue and those providers are already receiving state, federal, and local funds. There is not logical reason to exclude them.

We support this bill and urge consideration of the one amendment. I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

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