



Testimony to House Health and Human Services on House Bill 2571

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Executive Director
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Mister Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Kyle Kessler, I am the Executive Director for the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. The Association appreciates the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2571.

The Association represents the 26 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas that provide behavioral health services in all 105 counties, 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.

The Association stands in support of House Bill 2571. In Kansas, there are currently two CMHCs that are accredited by national organizations. Prairie View, Inc covering Harvey, McPherson, and Marion Counties, is accredited by The Joint Commission (TJC). Valeo Behavioral Healthcare covering Shawnee County is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Providers that achieve a three-year accreditation through a health care accrediting organization such as TJC or CARF have met comprehensive, internationally-recognized standards of quality. Both TJC and CARF accreditation credentials are recognized by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and a majority of managed care organizations, and a large number of private insurers.

Consistent evidence shows that accreditation programs improve the process of providing healthcare services. There is considerable evidence to show that accreditation programs improve clinical outcomes of a wide spectrum of clinical conditions. Accreditation programs should be supported as a tool to improve the quality of healthcare services.

Some additional benefits of accreditation are as follows:

- Provides an ongoing focus on quality improvement and measuring the outputs and outcomes of services;
- Improves risk management and risk reduction;
- Promotes sound ethical practices;
- Enhances staff recruitment and development; and
- Provides a customized, intensive review of programs and services.

The acceptance of deemed status by the State Mental Health Authority under the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) would allow those providers who obtain national accreditation to go through a licensure audit or inspection only once, instead of multiple inspections by the state and the accrediting organization.

The Association believes that the standards of the national accrediting bodies complement the KDADS' licensing regulations in that they seek and achieve the same goals of quality care, fiscal soundness, and corporate compliance, with both focusing on patients and patients' rights. Additionally, we believe that this would incentivize more CMHCs to seek national accreditation and receive exposure to emerging and best practices in health care. Lastly, we believe this can lead to the most efficient and effective administrative processes for this network of providers.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.