

My name is Jason Hess; I am the Executive Director of Heartland Regional Alcohol and Drug Assessment Center (RADAC), and am a representative of the Substance Use Disorder treatment sector. Heartland RADAC provides substance abuse assessments, care coordination and case management in 76 counties in the State of Kansas. It is from this capacity that I fully support the modification of K.S.A. 59-2946 so that communities can have an addition to the array of crisis services that will prevent individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders from unnecessary admissions in state hospitals, jails, and hospital emergency rooms. I support this modification for the following reasons:

- People who are chronically intoxicated have a brain disease and do not need to be admitted to a state hospital, incarcerated, or utilize costly emergency room services. What they do need, is a period of time for their use to be “interrupted” long enough to create a *window* of sobriety in which they may be able to engage in treatment or recovery services.
- The two state hospitals are far outside most Kansas resident’s home community, and are typically utilized as a last resort. State hospital detox admissions are utilized when an individual’s disease has progressed to the point that it will either kill them, or cause further harm to self or others. While it does provide an opportunity to medically detox, I argue it would be better facilitated in one’s home community where they can be connected to treatment and/or recovery supports while they are in a safe environment. Currently, with a moratorium reducing by sixty the number of beds at Osawatimie State Hospital, access to those detox beds by law enforcement has been reduced significantly as they are often being used for psychiatric patients.
- Incarcerating individuals because of their alcohol or drug use is a legal response to a chronic illness. When a person’s use contributes to a law violation (e.g. driving under the influence) a legal response is appropriate and warranted. However, utilizing jail space as a method of substance use interruption does not lend itself to the connection to recovery services.
- Utilizing a receiving center will not only provide an opportunity to hold on to clients long enough to interrupt their use, it will also provide enough time to determine if there are additional co-occurring mental or physical health issues that need to be addressed to assist an individual on their path to recovery.

In my years as a licensed addiction counselor I have watched families and loved-ones, various service providers, and court systems desperately search for answers to help their client, son, mother, etc. whose use has gotten to the point of being life threatening. Currently the only solution is incarceration or institutionalization if you can get them into a state hospital. Those are not solutions and certainly do not match the need. This modification enhances the existing continuum of services and provides an opportunity for confinement within an existing community and connection to existing community services once the client has stabilized.