



Testimony to Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare on Senate Bill 446

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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 as a neutral party on Senate Bill 446.

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 and its members have not had the opportunity to dialogue with the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services over Senate Bill 446. This appears to move the definition of catchment areas for the State Mental Health Hospitals (SMHH) from statute to the rules and regulation process. As a result, we have several questions we would offer for consideration. Some of those questions are as follows:

- What is the fiscal note for local governments to potential changes in SMHH county alignments around transportation and court costs?
- What does KDADS anticipate in terms of changes in each SMHH census capacity, budget and staffing?
- Are any budget changes planned to accommodate such shifts?
- Have any consumer or patient groups been consulted about these potential changes?
- Are other statutory changes needed to make such changes?

If the impetus to this bill is to change the catchment area for just a small number of counties, it may be easier to make those minor adjustments in statute at this time rather than the larger change this bill would create.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.