



Testimony to Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare on House Bill 2615

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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 2615.

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 likes the concept of what is suggested in HB 2615 which would allow for one hour of continuing education credit by the performance of two hours of gratuitous services to eligible low income patients up to a maximum of twenty continuing education credits per licensure period. This is the kind of innovative incentive that could help produce meaningful benefits to low-income patients and simultaneously benefit providers. As behavioral health care becomes a more significant partner in mainstream healthcare, this contributes to whole person, patient centered care.

Furthermore, we appreciate the liability protections provided to other provider systems in KSA 75-6115. At the appropriate time, we would request amendment of this bill to include Community Mental Health Centers as defined in current statute under KSA 75-6115 just as this Committee included in the Senate passed version of similar legislation in SB 402.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.