RAINBOWS
bringing potential to life

March 6, 2025

Dear Senator Erickson,

My name is Rachel Banning, and I am a proud mother to one heavenly child, Mia, who had severe cerebral palsy, and one adult child, Dylan, who is on the Autism Spectrum. I am also honored to serve as the President of Rainbows United, an organization that has supported both of my children for years in south central Kansas.

I am writing today to express my support for HB 2240 and to request legislative oversight regarding the recent changes proposed by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS). These changes, which include a new assessment tool, unbundling of services, and addressing conflict of interest over Targeted Case Management, have been introduced without the collective input of stakeholders—individuals, families, and providers. This lack of collaboration has led to disruptions and concerns about the timing and implementation of these changes.

From the perspective of Rainbows United, the most concerning change is the approach to addressing the conflict of interest over Targeted Case Management. Rainbows United serves 422 children in Butler, Sedgwick, and Sumner counties through Targeted Case Management. Many of these children also receive services in our Family Support Service program, which operates outside of school hours, during evenings, or on weekends. This allows parents and caregivers to retain employment, contributing to the economic development of our community.

As many of you know, parenting can be overwhelming, especially when navigating multiple complex systems such as healthcare, special education, and community-based services. Advocating for access to essential and life-altering services for our children adds another layer of complexity. Targeted Case Management is essential for sustaining family stability. Enclosed, you will find three family stories from some of the families served by Rainbows United Targeted Case Management, illustrating the critical need for this service. Rainbows United is one of the few providers of case management for children in Kansas.

I kindly request your support to ensure that state agencies do not impede the already challenging lives and work of our intellectual and developmental disability community. Together, we can work towards solutions that benefit all stakeholders involved.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rachel M Banning

Rachel Banning, President

Harrison Harry Gant – approved 3.3.25
Mom: Laura Gant, 913.602.9088, mlgant08@gmail.com
Aunt: Brielle

Having a Targeted Case Manager has made all the difference for Harry and his family. "Our TCM is the first person we think of when things go wrong," said Laura, his mom. "Noemi is compassionate, resourceful and helps anchor us in times of uncertainty and crisis." She is quick to point out Noemi doesn't always have the answer immediately, but that doesn't stop her from digging in and finding solutions to any situation.

Recently the downstairs utility room became a safety hazard for Harry. His curiosity and fascination with the room and its contents was a big draw for him. One incident led to a flooded basement and increased anxiety for Harry's safety. When Noemi learned of the challenge, she began brainstorming with the family and others. Her curiosity and desire to lighten the load for the family led to a locking door installation on the utility room keeping everyone, including Harry, safe.

"Her ability to take on any situation and bring ideas to the solution are a breath of fresh air," said Harry's Aunt Brielle, who lives with and helps the family. "So many people say "No" or "It can't be done", but that doesn't happen with Noemi. She carries our story with her, looks for options, cuts out distractions, and connects us to resources we didn't even know existed. This allows our busy family to be successful."

Harry is verbal but doesn't speak. Noemi helped secure an ipad to help him communicate with others using pictures. "He's learning to use the iPad to tell us what he needs," said Laura. "Being able to share without frustration is great for everyone."

Harry received early intervention services from Rainbows' therapist Rebecca when he was born. "He has always been skeptical of new people, but Rebecca won him over and we all looked forward to her visits," said Laura. "She would work on speech and mobility, while he enjoyed the one-on-one playtime. He learned to walk with her help."

The third child in the family, Harry was diagnosed with failure to thrive, has seizures, and a pulmonary condition. He still gets sick easily and it takes longer for him to recover. A sweet, smiley 8-year-old, he loves to explore the backyard and spend time outside.

"Having a TCM who knows our family and isn't afraid to try new solutions to meet unique needs has been a game-changer for our family," said Laura. "The partnership is transformative. Harry and our family would not be where we are now, without Noemi's TCM support. Thank you, Rainbows!"

Layne Connelly III – Approved 2.28.35
TCM: Ellen Haukom
Mom: Kari Connelly, 316.210.7887
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Fight for life
TCM support helps family cope

Layne's life has been a surprise ever since he entered the world 8 weeks early weighing 3.7 pounds. "From the moment he was born, he's encountered challenges," said his mom, Kari. "In the beginning, he was so little. He died 7 times and came back to us and has been fighting ever since." Due to his rough start, Layne has severe brain damage and was late to meet developmental milestones of rolling over, crawling, walking and talking. That's when the family was introduced to Rainbows but ended up moving out of state shortly after.

A few more unexpected challenges with his dad passing away, Layne and his mom moved back to Wichita when he was 8 years old. At that time, Kari knew she needed help and reached out once again to Rainbows. "When we moved back, we started Targeted Case Management with Rainbows. Our TCM Ellen has been a life saver," said Kari. "I can call Ellen with the current challenge, and she'll find resources to help with everything from vitamins and medicine to a walk-in bathtub home modification, wheelchair, and his special tricycle. She goes above and beyond for us. I'd be lost without her." Ellen is proud to provide TCM services to families, "I help families with funding and resources. This allows the families to focus on what is important and not stress about how they will fund a needed item," said Ellen.

In addition to Layne's brain injury, he also suffers from quadriplegic cerebral palsy and sever autism. A fighter who has come so far, Layne is now 12 years old, loves kittens and Pokémon, takes short walks with his mom, and plays Nintendo Switch whenever he can. "We take one day at a time," said Kari. "Each day with Layne is a gift. We could not be more grateful for our Case Manger to help us through the journey."

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Justin Lour
Mom: Julie Lour 316.570.4792
jlour021190@gmail.com

TCM: Lynne Snodgress

Fifteen-year-old Jay Jay loves Fortnite video games, and is the strongest person his mom has ever known. She recalls his many surgeries, how he advocates for himself and how he sets his mind to do things others say he will never do.

Born with a rare form of muscular dystrophy, doctors didn't seem to know how to help him or his family navigate the complexities of a child with the unique illness. "The best thing they did was connect us to Rainbows," said Julie, Jay Jay's mother.

In the early years, Jay Jay got early intervention therapies, and his family got a team of Rainbows professionals to help walk through the ups and downs of his condition. Currently Rainbows provides Targeted Case Management services helping the family connect to resources and funding for things they need. "Our TCM is great," says Julie. "Lynn helped us get a ramp so we can get Jay Jay's wheelchair into our vehicle. They also helped with a stander, walker and other equipment to help him keep mobile through the years."

Jay Jay is one of 7 children in the family home and often advocates for what he needs. Just last year he proved he could take regular high school education classes. "Whatever he sets his mind to do, he will find a way," said Julie. He is generally accepting of his illness and likes to be as self-sufficient as possible, often explaining his disability to others. In fact, Jay Jay would like to be a computer engineer when he goes to college.