big lakes

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TO: Senator Renee Erickson, Chair
Members of Senate Committee on Government Efficiency

FROM: Liz Holle, Deputy Operations Officer for Big Lakes Developmental Center

DATE: March 11, 2025

RE: HB2240

My name is Liz Holle, and I am writing to you as a service provider who is deeply concerned about the upcoming changes that the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services is planning to implement for individuals with I/DD, particularly the overhaul of day services to take effect on May 1st.

While I understand the changes' intent to improve services for individuals with I/DD, I strongly believe that the way these changes are being structured and implemented will cause significant harm to our system and the individuals served by it.

One of the most concerning aspects of the new policies is the division of current services into seven different service categories, each with its own set of requirements. These changes will severely limit the options available to clients in how they can receive services.

Currently, clients can freely access a range of essential activities—such as work training, vocational opportunities, life skills development, and community engagement—under a single service definition. These services are available throughout the day based on individual needs and preferences. However, under the new structure, participation in these programs will be limited by the number of units allocated in a client’s care plan with the MCO. This means our clients will only be able to participate for a set number of units each month.

These changes are being implemented with other major changes in I/DD supports. So many changes too fast will be a shock to the service system. Individuals with I/DD, service providers, and family members need to be actively involved in redesigning the system for improvements to ensure they meet their intended goal without harming the individuals these changes are intended to support. KDADS has yet to explain how these changes are going to improve the lives of individuals with I/DD the way they are currently designed and how these changes promote choice and independence for this population.

If these changes go into effect without further consideration, the support network that many of our clients rely on will be even more underfunded and overworked, leading to a breakdown in service delivery. Moreover, the reduction in community service options and the absence of flexible programming will significantly diminish clients' quality of life and their opportunities for personal growth and independence.

KDADS claims these changes are necessary because of the corrective action plan from federal government (CMS). While CMS imposes requirements on states, it also allows flexibility in designing systems tailored to each state’s needs. I believe there are alternatives to their planned changes that would meet the needs of CMS without drastically altering or eliminating preferred choices for those receiving services.

Last month, I joined a workgroup formed in response to widespread concerns from family members and professionals in the I/DD service community. This group is working with KDADS to review proposals and recommend revisions to their implementation plans. While I appreciate that KDADS is finally seeking input from providers and stakeholders, this bill remains necessary to ensure continued accountability. It will help ensure KDADS remains responsive to public concerns and adopts feasible, common-sense solutions that do not harm the individuals relying on these services.

I encourage you to reflect on the significant impacts that these proposed changes could have on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, and the dedicated service providers who support them. Your endorsement of HB2240 is essential for ensuring that the legislature holds KDADS accountable, listens to the community's concerns, and thoughtfully considers reasonable and workable solutions.

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