



# Salina Regional Health Center

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

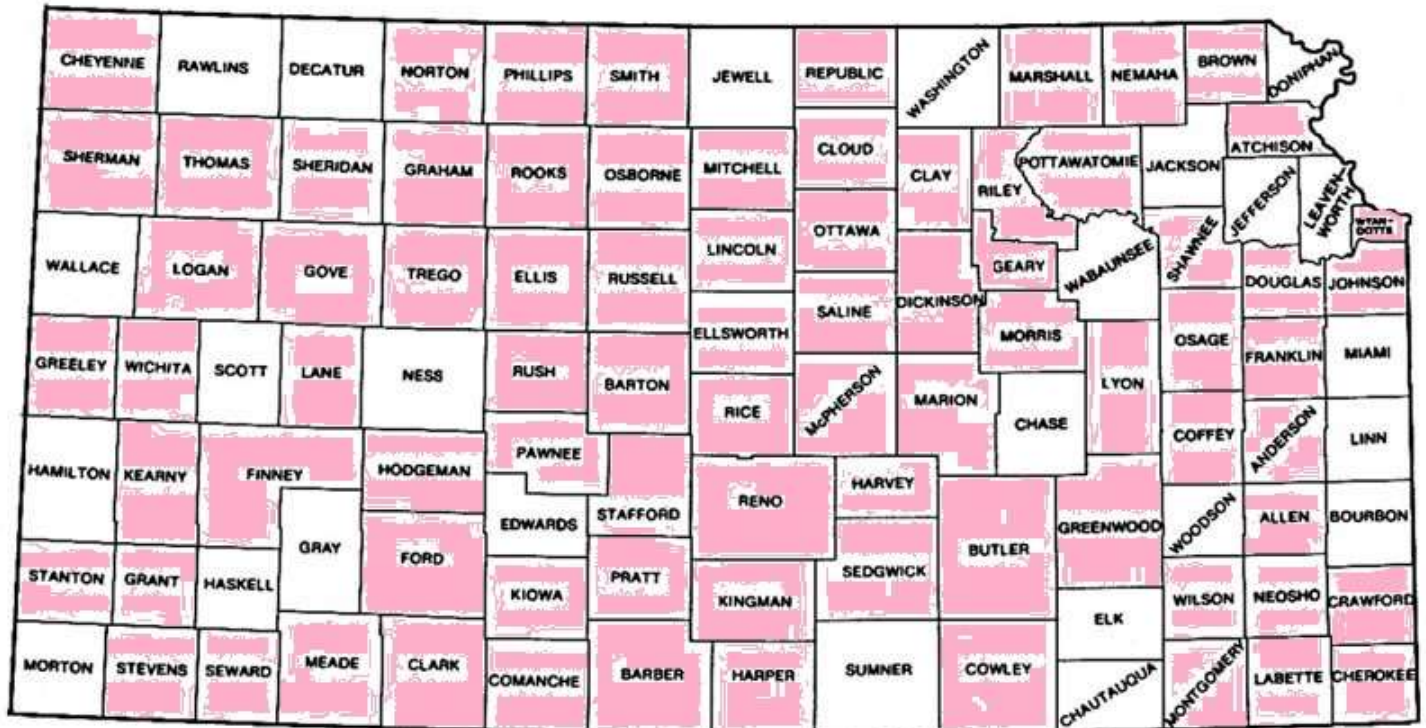
FROM: Shayla Koochel  
Director of Behavioral Health  
Salina Regional Health Center

DATE: March 5, 2025

RE: Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Budget written only testimony

On behalf of Salina Regional Health Center and its facilities in North Central Kansas, we want to thank you for the funds the legislature committed to support the existing adult behavioral health beds in Kansas hospitals. We urge the committee to consider supporting the included amount of \$10 million to continue this effort for behavioral health bed access in Kansas.

Salina Regional Health Center is recognized in the region for our Behavioral Health Services, particularly by law enforcement agencies that bring patients to our facility. With many voluntary adult bed units closing in the past decade, SRHC is committed to maintaining our 15 beds. Notably, our behavioral health unit is the only voluntary unit in the western quadrant of Kansas. The continued success of this program means patients can be closer to family and friends while also creating less of a transportation challenge for referring facilities. In fiscal year 2024, our 15 bed unit not only provided care for patients in our region, but also for patients from 81 of the 105 counties in Kansas as demonstrated below.



The funding provided by the legislature last year was crucial for our program. As you know from managing state hospitals, staffing these units poses significant challenges. Specialized training and a unique dedication to care are essential. Moreover, the high number of uninsured and underinsured patients using our services contributes to an unfunded liability for the program.

Your support last year was timely and invaluable to our facility. It also communicated a strong message of appreciation from the legislature, for which we are immensely grateful. Behavioral health care will continue to be an essential need in our community and the wider region.

We also want to thank you for strengthening Medicaid with an increase in outpatient reimbursement codes and would like you to consider adding \$20 million SGF, \$50 million all funds to continue this work from last year. Your commitment to increasing these lagging rates helps us care for the patients we are already serving. Additionally, we appreciate your work to increase the provider assessment for the short term and ask for a permanent increase in this assessment rate. As you are aware, increasing the assessment rate does not require funds from the state budget, but instead allows hospitals across the state to invest in themselves.

Thank you again for the work from last year and your consideration to continue these vital investments in Kansas healthcare.