

SB 88 / Children's Advocacy Center Assessment Fee House Appropriations Committee

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

My name is Amy Boydston, Executive Director of the state network of Children's Advocacy Centers. I am testifying on behalf of the sixteen non-profit CAC programs across the state.

As a proponent of SB 88, I request the committee's consideration of increasing the Children's Advocacy Center assessment fee levied on convicted offenders of crimes against children. This bill would increase the fee from \$100 to \$400.

About Children's Advocacy Centers

Following an outcry of child sexual abuse or serious physical abuse, Children's Advocacy Centers are the single model that brings all of the players – law enforcement and social work investigators, prosecutors, medical and mental health experts and victim advocates – together in a coordinated, efficient, cost-saving response. CACs are centers of excellence for facilitating healing for abused children and their caregivers. Our multidisciplinary team approach results in more efficient case investigations.

- Response model that is child-centered and less traumatic for children.
- Improved coordination between law enforcement and child protection investigators.
- More abused children access specialized medical & mental health care. [1]
- Single point of case coordination to ensure no child "falls through the cracks."
- CACs save money – on average \$1000 per case compared to a traditional investigation. [2]

In Kansas, sixteen non-profit agencies operate CAC programs in 20 locations throughout the state. More than 50 counties work within a formal protocol with their local CAC to provide a multidisciplinary "team" response. (See attached "Quick Facts" data.)

About the CAC Assessment Fee

The 2004 legislature first recognized Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) in state statute and established an assessment fee to populate the "CAC Fund." The fee is *paid solely by convicted offenders* of persons crimes, sex offenses and crimes affecting family relationships in cases where the victim is a minor. CAC Fund is administered by the Attorney General's office and in turn, provides financial support for operating expenses for CACs to enable these Centers to aid other child victims of crime. The table below shows the recent distribution from the Fund:

FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13
\$47,610	\$40,670	\$30,000	\$33,600	\$33,600	\$33,600

- Assessment fee has never been increased since being established in 2004.
- The requested amount of \$400 is consistent with the "KBI fee" levied on offenders for processing collection kits in cases including sexual abuse.
- CACs provide additional evidence collection and processing through securing children's statements regarding their own victimization or witness to victimization of another, and deliver victim advocacy services to families trying to navigate the complex criminal justice and child welfare systems.

In FY08, the Fund was distributed annually and 10 CAC programs were awarded equal shares of the Fund (1/10th of fund total). With the growth of the CAC movement across the state, this year each CAC will be eligible for one-sixteenth (1/16th) of the Fund. The amount to each CAC is decreasing, while their client services are increasing. Today's award to each CAC will be less than half of what was received 3-4 years ago.

In an effort to stabilize funding for CACs facing reduced grant funds and to ensure the Centers are there when kids need them, we ask for the Committee to approve SB 88 and maintain this funding stream for crime victim services.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.
Amy Boydston, Executive Director
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Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County*

Wichita www.cacsckansas.org

Heart to Heart CAC*

Newton, McPherson www.hearttoheartcac.com

Hope's Place CAC

Concordia

Leavenworth CAC

Leavenworth www.aafv.net

Meadowlark House CAC*

Dodge City

SOS Child Advocacy Center*

Emporia, Burlington www.soskansas.com

Sunflower House*

Shawnee www.sunflowerhouse.org

Western Kansas CAC*

Colby, Scott City, Sublette, Mobile Unit www.wkcac.org

**CACs with an asterisk indicate national accreditation through an external review by the National Children's Alliance.*

Chris's Place CAC*

Salina www.capsosalina.org

Hope Unlimited CAC*

Iola www.hope-unlimited.org

Horizons CAC*

Hutchinson www.childsexualabuseprograms.com

LifeHouse CAC *

Topeka www.lifehousecac.com

Pittsburg Children's Advocacy Center*

Pittsburg www.cacpittsburg.org

Stepping Stones CAC*

Manhattan <http://casa.manhattanks.org>

Sunlight CAC*

El Dorado www.scarfks.org

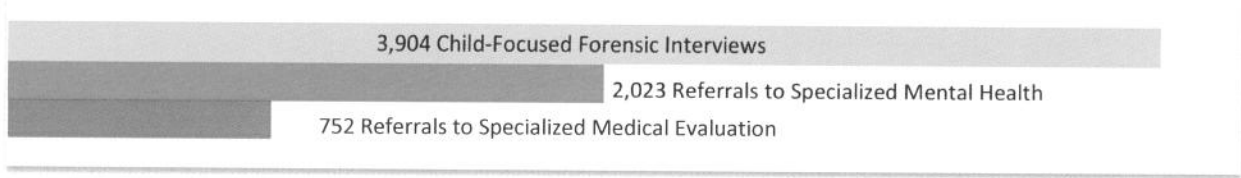
(Developing) Dell Hayden Memorial CAC

Great Bend www.familycrisiscntr.org

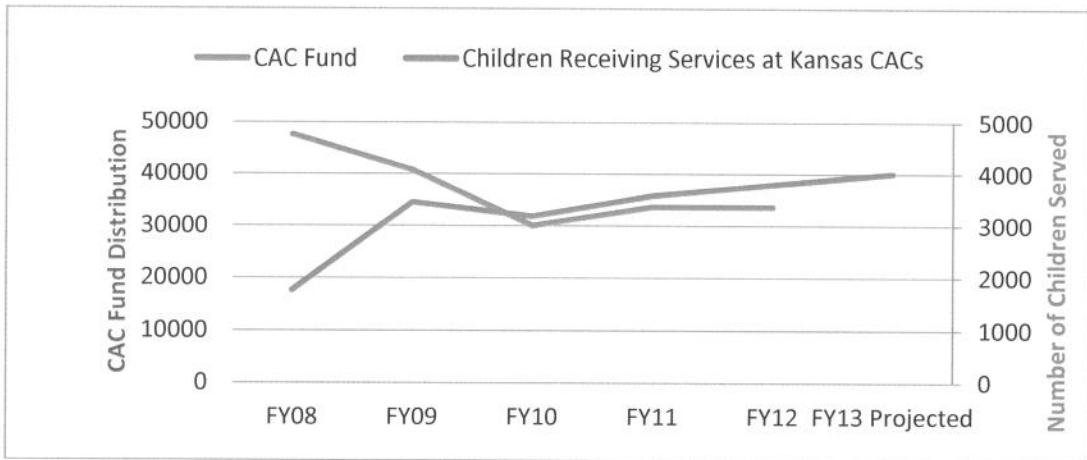
[1] Multi-site Evaluation of Children's Advocacy Centers (2006). Cross, T., Jones, L. et. al. Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire. [2] Cost-Benefit Analysis of Community Responses to Child Maltreatment. Shadoin, A, Formby, J. National CAC and University of Alabama.

Children's Advocacy Centers – Quick Facts

CAC Services in 2012



Children Served by CACs Compared to CAC Fund Distribution



Children's Advocacy Centers in Kansas 2013

