

Testimony: In support of SB 217

March 7, 2013

Senate Public Health and Welfare

Presented by Betsy Cauble, Ph.D., LMSW

Kansas State University

Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work

Good afternoon. My name is Betsy Cauble and I am the Head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at Kansas State University. I have been teaching and preparing students to enter into the profession of Social Work for over twenty years. I am here today to express my support for SB 217 because it corrects a serious problem that affects my students, my graduates and those who are practicing social work in Kansas.

As the Head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at Kansas State University, I am deeply troubled by KDADS policy that excludes social workers from job opportunities in state licensed drug treatment facilities.

- The net effect of this policy is that it devalues the nationally accredited social work degree program that Kansas State University has spent years and millions of dollars developing and offering.
- It damages the careers of our students and graduates who have invested tens of thousands of dollars to earn their social work degree.
- The policy fails to recognize that social workers are mental health providers who can legally provide comprehensive treatment, including substance abuse services.

I have heard, and you will hear, some professionals state that social workers are not qualified to practice in addictions. Those comments are unprofessional and they disregard the law. Since the passage of the social work practice act in 1974, social workers have been providing substance abuse services. KSU's social work program prepares students for licensure and employment as entry level clinicians. Because of licensure, the social worker will obtain a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education every two years throughout their career. This enables them to become experts in their practice in whatever arena it is.

In closing, KSU depends on the state of Kansas to honor our educational system, our students and our graduates who are in the workforce to provide high quality behavioral health care. KDADS policy fails to acknowledge the men and women who choose to practice social work in our state.

I urge you to support SB 217.

Thank you.