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Kansas Psychiatric Society

To: Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

From: Vishal Adma, President Kansas Psychiatric Society

Date: March 17, 2015

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 254

Madam Chair and members of the Committee I am appearing here today in my capacity as the President of the Kansas Psychiatric Society (KPS) in opposition to Senate Bill 254. The Kansas Psychiatry Society is a professional, non-profit corporation serving psychiatrists in Kansas. It is organized for the purpose of supporting professionalism in the practice of psychiatry and promoting top quality mental health area. It is a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association.

Our concern with this measure is the proposed elimination of the use of the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders" (DSM-5) as the approved mental health diagnostic criteria for Kansas clinicians. This change in policy is a move that will put patients at risk and seriously destabilize the treatment of patients and the work conducted by mental health professionals in Kansas. The diagnostic criteria are evidence-based and help doctors maintain a consistent approach to diagnosis and treatment, ensuring patients and their families that they are receiving the best and most accepted treatments for their conditions.

The DSM-5 is the consensus publication for clinicians in Kansas who treat patients with depression, anxiety, autism, eating disorders, substance use, and other mental health issues. Without the DSM-5, these mental health and substance use conditions would be undefined in the state and subject to multiple, potentially confusing interpretations. There is no evidence-based, science-driven, or clinically appropriate replacement for the DSM-5.

Families of children with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and learning disabilities may also be impacted. The use of standard diagnostic criteria is essential for determining routine issues of eligibility for educational and health benefits for children with autism. Educators and mental health experts also use it to ensure educational accommodations for children with ADHD and learning disabilities.

Published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), the DSM-5 is the publication for physicians across the country and the globe to diagnose and classify mental illnesses. Many States, like Kansas, require all mental health clinicians to be trained in the most current DSM to become board certified and licensed to practice. State and federal legislators, as well as the Veteran's Administration and Department of Defense Health Systems, rely on the manual's standardized mental health diagnostic information.

On behalf of the KPS I would ask that this Committee take no further action on this measure as long as it contains this dangerous elimination of the DSM-5 as the diagnostic criteria for the mental health professionals under the jurisdiction of the Behavioral Science Regulatory Board.

Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to respond to questions at the appropriate time.