

February 10, 2017

TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Written Testimony regarding HB 2180

Chairman Waymaster and Members of the Committee;

My name is Walter Hill and I am the Executive Director of High Plains Mental Health Center. High Plains provides comprehensive mental health services over a 19,000 square mile rural and frontier region of Northwest Kansas. High Plains' catchment area includes Russell, Osborne, Smith, Phillips, Rooks, Ellis, Rush, Ness, Wallace, Sherman, Cheyenne, Rawlins, Thomas, Logan, Trego, Graham, Decatur, Norton, Gove, and Sheridan counties and the 100,000 residents of those counties.

The recent four percent cuts in Medicaid reimbursement for our operations of High Plains across our 20 county catchment area has resulted in an approximate \$175,000 annual reduction in resources to serve the most needy of our patients, in addition to the loss of Medicaid revenue of \$400,000 for the closed Health Home Program. We have seen a reduction in staffing levels from 148 to 132 positions from the beginning of FY2016 through the end of December as a response to these reductions in resources. At the same time we struggle to provide competitive wages to recruit and retain staff to serve the citizens of our region, to meet the ongoing service needs of nearly 5000 patients annually.

I write in support of HB 2180 which would increase the HMO Privilege Fee from 3.31 percent to 5.77 percent effective January 1, 2017, to restore the four percent reduction in Medicaid reimbursement, and ask the committee's consideration of the impact of returning Medicaid reimbursements to their previous levels.

Sincerely,



Walter Hill, MS, LMLP, LCP
Executive Director