



To: House Appropriations Committee

From: Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals  
Steve Denny, Chairman

Date: March 12, 2018

Re: Written support for HB 2688 Establishing a Behavioral Health Task Force

Chairman Waymaster and members of the House Appropriations Committee thank you for considering the comments of the Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals (KAAP) regarding House Bill 2688. Established in 1984, KAAP is the state's largest non-profit member association devoted solely to substance use disorder treatment providers and prevention programs across Kansas. KAAP represents a variety of Substance Use Disorder treatment programs, who provide urgently needed care to individuals throughout Kansas.

KAAP supports HB 2688 and the development of the Kansas Behavioral Task Force. KAAP appreciates the legislatures obvious desire to be informed and engaged regarding the challenges Kansans face with addiction and mental health needs. In particular, KAAP believes that the partnerships established through this bill represent important systems that are impacted on a regular basis.

We believe that KAAP will provide important contributions in helping the task force to consider the complex interaction of Substance Use disorders with other systems. We hope to focus on solutions to improving our system with consideration of innovative methods to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. KAAP believes there are new ways to integrate technology and to form creative partnerships to help Kansas insure that behavioral health needs are addressed in an effective and efficient manner. We are grateful to be part of such a diverse membership and stand ready to offer our expertise to the project as it relates to substance abuse disorders and treatment.

With substance abuse and addiction at the forefront of our Kansas community's concerns, this Task Force should certainly offer the opportunity for a robust analysis of those problems and how best to address them effectively on behalf of Kansas. The recent establishment by Executive Order of the Governor's Task Force to Address Substance Abuse Disorders, while targeted at the substance abuse as its focus, is charged with providing a report to the Governor in six months. The work of that group and the information compiled for its report will likely be of benefit to this standing Task Force as it does its work.

KAAP believes HB 2688 has the correct makeup of diverse expertise needed to make this Task Force successful. The need to address the issues identified as they relate to state hospitals, workforce, and sustainable financing are of paramount importance, as well as the crisis of suicide and as already mentioned opioid and substance epidemic facing Kansas today.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide supporting testimony regarding this important matter.