

Mr. Dan Oblinger
c/o The Breakthrough Club
1010 N. Main
Wichita, KS 67203

January 24, 2017

Health and Human Services Committee
c/o The Honorable Dan Hawkins, Chair
Kansas State Senate, 546-S

Senator Hawkins and Members of the Committee:

I am writing you in support of HB 2044, a measure designed to allow "clubhouse" model psychosocial rehabilitation programs to receive reimbursements from Medicaid. This issue is an important one. I am writing you as a private citizen with a unique perspective on the issue of community mental health treatment for people who suffer from severe and persistent mental illnesses. I have been an advocate and board member for just such a clubhouse program, The Breakthrough Club, since 2009.

At that time, I had been a police officer for seven years and during my career had many occasions to respond to emergency calls for people with mental health crisis. I helped bring Crisis Intervention Team mental health training to law enforcement officers in Sedgwick County. In these efforts, I learned the authentic power of psychosocial rehabilitation and peer support to keep consumers of the mental health care system off the street and out of jail.

Please consider the benefit of this bill not just those for who suffer from severe and persistent mental health problems and their families. I assure you that allowing efficacious programs like clubhouses to have an equal footing in the treatment system promotes the welfare and safety of the whole community. Witnessing the community and peer support provided by a clubhouse has convinced me that psychosocial rehabilitation programs work. Their emphasis on supported employment, healthy socialization, and peer mentoring and education are proven. Clubhouses are one of the best means of keeping the mentally ill out of the emergency medical and criminal justice systems.

Thank you for your sober consideration of this worthy measure. I want to emphasize that my opinions and observations are just that, not an official endorsement by any portion of the criminal justice system in Kansas.

Respectfully,


Dan Oblinger