



March 9, 2017

**Testimony to the House Committee on Health and Human Services  
SB 32**

Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, my name is Greg Hennen. I presently serve as Executive Director for Four County Mental Health Center, Inc. located in southeast Kansas. Our agency serves the Kansas counties of Montgomery, Wilson, Elk, Chautauqua, and Cowley. In our catchment area are approximately 86,000 covered lives to whom we provide safety-net behavioral health services across eight (8) office locations as well as crisis intervention services, 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 32 which would amend the Medical Student and Resident Loan Assistance Act to include psychiatry for medical student loan repayment. This would greatly assist our agency in recruiting and retaining psychiatrists, of which there is a continual and ever growing shortage. Presently we employ one psychiatrist, our medical director, and he directs the practice of four mid-level providers (PA or APRN). He travels to our office from his residence in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. There are no psychiatrists residing within our five (5) county catchment area. As our medical director gets closer to retirement I am deeply concerned about our ability to secure another psychiatrist to serve in this mandated role. SB 32 could serve as a pivotal tool in our future recruitment efforts.

Our statewide Association has put forth an initiative known as Mental Health 2020 (MH 2020) to help address the workforce shortage of psychiatrists, to establish more community crisis stabilization centers and to restore funding for CMHCs that has eroded over the last ten years. SB 32 is one part of MH 2020. We ask you to support this legislation and pass it favorably out of Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today, and I will stand for questions.