



## **TESTIMONY OF KRISTEN POWELL, Pharm-D**

### **Before the Kansas Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee**

**March 14, 2018**

Madame Chair, members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, my name is Kristen Powell and I am a pharmacist and site manager for Genoa Healthcare. Thank you for the opportunity to express Genoa's support for Senate Bill 438, a bill that exempts Community Mental Health Centers from the burdensome prior authorization requirements for Medicaid patients who receive treatment at these centers. We support the bill because we believe this bill will limit the disruptions in our patients' healthcare.

Genoa places pharmacies inside community mental health centers. My pharmacy is located within Family Service and Guidance Center in Topeka and my patients are children. We understand the unique and special needs of the severe and persistent mentally ill (SPMI) population. Our pharmacies offer full service, confidential and discrete pharmacy services to clients, and present a convenience for filling prescriptions. Our pharmacies have very low rates of unclaimed prescriptions, resulting in higher adherence and lower overall healthcare costs.

Over ninety percent of Genoa's patients are on some kind of public assistance, Medicare, Medicaid or are dual eligible. Therefore, any legislation affecting Medicaid affects our patients disproportionately compared to other pharmacies. Genoa pharmacists work very hard to ensure our patients receive the best possible care and are adherent to their medications. On average, mental health patients take 48 prescriptions per year. Comparatively, a person not living with a mental illness takes 12 per year.

Medication adherence is especially important within the mental health population. Studies have shown that a one-day gap in therapy increases the chance of hospitalization by 50 percent. A hospital stay for a person living with Schizophrenia can cost between sixteen and twenty-two thousand dollars.

This bill will help Genoa's Medicaid population stay adherent to their medication. Prior authorization can take days and requires approximately 60 minutes of staff time to submit and document each request. To add to the burden, each plan has its own prior authorization form. These multiple forms and the overall process takes a great deal of time. This adds up to time the patient has to go without that medication. This process also increases for people taking multiple medications per month. If a prior authorization is necessary, our patients will not wait for their medications while a PA is approved. Furthermore, many of our patients rely on public transportation and once they leave the

facility, they will normally not return to pick up their prescriptions. This will cause lower adherence rates and will increase the number of unclaimed prescription.

Each day as a pharmacist for Genoa, I am in a unique position to help patients with their mental illness. Each patient and situation is unique and must be handled that way for the treatment to be successful. For many of our patients it has taken months for them to seek and begin treatment. With this special population I feel it is vital that we have all medication options readily available for our patients when they finally arrive willing to receive that treatment. One area where prior authorizations have a major impact is, same day treatment and the use of long acting injectable antipsychotics. These specific medications are given prior to the patient leaving the facility. They increase the chance of successful treatment for patients by reducing the opportunity of non-compliance found with oral medications. But once again, in many cases, they will not wait for the prior authorization. I ask today that you help important treatments such as this, be available and accessible to our patients. I ask that prior to your vote you consider the patient and the strength it took seek help, and their need to receive timely, therapeutic treatment. We ask that you support Senate Bill 438.

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, once again thank you for allowing me to testify in support Senate Bill 438. Genoa respectfully asks that you vote yes on SB 438. Thank you and I will try to answer any questions you may have.