



Testimony to the Senate Ways and Means Committee Senate Bill 94

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Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, my name is Kyle Kessler. I am the Executive Director for the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. The Association represents the 26 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas that provide behavioral health services in all 105 counties, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. In Kansas, CMHCs are the local Mental Health Authorities coordinating the delivery of publicly funded community-based mental health services. As part of licensing regulations, CMHCs are required to provide services to all Kansans needing them, regardless of their ability to pay. This makes the community mental health system the “safety net” for Kansans with mental health needs.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of SB 94 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.

CMHCs around the state are inundated with demands. These range from trying to help alleviate the pressure on the state mental health hospitals to trying to help families with youth and adolescents who need crisis services. These demands are in addition to the day to day responsibilities they have providing treatment for mild and moderate mental health needs and work with community hospitals, law enforcement, child welfare providers and schools. In 2016, CMHCs treated approximately 10,000 more Kansans than the year before.

Our Association requested that CMHCs report the estimated loss under the four percent reduction, and the estimated loss will be nearly eleven million dollars for FY 2017. The additional reduction as a result of the State’s budget shortfall has in most cases resulted in a reduction of employees and services which equates to a reduction in access. We request that this funding be restored and that this Committee pass SB 94.

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