



Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.

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Mental Health 2020 Proposal

The Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas is proposing to state policy makers an initiative that will be known as Mental Health 2020.

Mental Health 2020

Kansas has long depended on the Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) System to treat patients with the severest mental illnesses. This 105 county wide system is anchored by locally operated and administered CMHCs that provide an array of community-based programs. This system that was once supported by the State has seen that support erode significantly over the last decade.

The collaboration of CMHCs with other systems of care is vital to the health and welfare of Kansans. CMHCs are at the intersection of not only other arenas of healthcare including community hospitals, physicians' clinics, and other health and human services providers but also work with local law enforcement, community corrections, and schools. Whether responding to natural disasters such as tornadoes or workplace violence, CMHCs are integral to community care and treatment.

The decertification of Osawatomie State Hospital (OSH) by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has created not only additional budget challenges for the State but significant capacity problems. The moratorium on involuntary admissions that was announced by KDADS over a year ago has resulted in alarming and dangerous circumstances at the community level. Although the decertification of a state mental health hospital in Kansas was not unprecedented, our research has found that a moratorium on involuntary admissions at a state mental health hospital was unprecedented, at least in recent history. This is an hourly concern for those who work in and around the community mental health system and their local partners.

Research shows an increase in mental health treatment needs across the country and Kansas is no exception. CMHCs treated over 135,000 Kansans last year that ranged in acuity from moderate mental health treatment needs to adults with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) such as schizophrenia and children with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED).

A mental health system that was once a source of pride at the state level and the envy of many nationally has experienced several devastating events that have created a system in crisis. Although a reduction of funding over time has certainly been a significant factor, other issues have increased the number of barriers to providing high quality mental health treatment. One example is the departure of an internationally acclaimed private psychiatric treatment facility in the Menninger Clinic which trained hundreds of mental health treatment professionals, a large number of whom stayed in Kansas to live, work and raise their families. Furthermore, the state has seen a reduction in inpatient behavioral health units at community hospitals and public state mental health hospital beds as well.

The Association of Community Mental Health Centers is proposing an initiative we are referring to as Mental Health 2020. This will be an initiative to restore funding balance to the CMHC System as well as a workforce development program to increase the number of psychiatrists who will be trained and incentivized to stay in Kansas. We also propose funding for data analysis programs to help the State track and measure successes or failures of coordinated care efforts that were commenced and then lost with the elimination of the Health Homes Program. Lastly, the Association requests funding for the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) to invest in community-based crisis stabilization and treatment services similar to programs commenced in Kansas City with Rainbow Services, Inc. and in Wichita with the collaborative program there.

The Association proposes a total of \$20 million, with \$11 million in FY 2018 and \$9 million in FY 2019, to restore the consolidated grants program back to the FY 2007 level. Mental Health Reform funding that was implemented in coordination with the closure of hundreds of state mental health hospital beds has eroded significantly over time. When the State originally cut this program, it was in combination with an increase in Medicaid services. This funding has been gradually reduced to the point it no longer allows CMHCs the flexibility to serve other patients adequately. As a result, the restoration of the State's original commitment to Mental Health Reform is essential.

The Association is not seeking funding restoration without proposing additional commitments on the side of CMHCs. The CMHCs are committed to having a system-wide enhancement through training and innovation in the treatment areas of trauma informed care, early childhood mental health, and care coordination programs. This would be aligned with the national initiative that Kansas initially embraced with the federal Excellence in Mental Health Act but then eventually forfeited its participation. Furthermore, CMHCs would be open to incentives for participating in national accreditation programs that could certainly raise the bar for care quality across the state.

The connection between mental health and public safety has long been ignored. However, by replicating successful programs like the partnership in Reno County between law enforcement, community corrections, and the CMHC, our state will reduce costs related to incarceration and recidivism while improving health care.

The Association proposes funding of \$3.1 million by FY 2021 for enhancing the psychiatric residency training program at the University of Kansas Department of Psychiatry. This would provide for training of an additional ten psychiatrists each year by 2021. The additional residency slots would also have a requirement that those participating in the enhanced program be required to serve at least two years at a state mental health hospital or three years at a CMHC. This would give Kansas a head start in retaining these vital treatment providers in our state. This would begin with \$550,000 for an additional four residents for FY 2018 and gradually increase to the proposed resident and funding levels by FY 2021.

Lastly, the Association proposes \$5.4 million for FY 2018 to sustain the current crisis stabilization programs in the Kansas City Metro and Wichita areas and also establish other community-based or regionally-based programs. The current programs have been successful in creating a “port of calm” for persons who have had an interaction with law enforcement as a result of mental illness and substance or alcohol abuse. As a result, hospital admissions have been reduced and referral to appropriate community-based services has occurred.

The Association believes that CMHCs’ commitment to indefinite sustainability needs to be met by its partners in state government. The recognition that CMHCs are the safety net for persons with mental health needs is underscored by their ability to prevent unnecessary emergency room visits and admissions to higher cost inpatient settings such as community hospitals and state mental health hospitals as well as other high cost alternatives including incarceration and engagement with the child welfare system.

Mental Health 2020 is a health and human services initiative that will improve the lives of families and the quality of the Kansas work force. Our goal is to be the best mental health treatment system in the United States and that goal is unwavering.

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