



Testimony by Deb Stidham, President
Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals
March 18, 2021

Substitute for SB 84 – Neutral

To: Hon. John Barker, Chair, House Federal and State Affairs
From: Deb Stidham, Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals
Date: March 18, 2021

Re: Substitute for SB 84

Hon. Chairman Barker and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee:

My name is Deb Stidham. I am here today representing the Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals, an addiction prevention and treatment provider trade association which has been in existence since 1974. KAAP's membership includes agencies located all over the state providing an array of services from outpatient to residential treatment and prevention services.

An estimated 46,000 adults in Kansas are believed to suffer from a gambling disorder. The 2017 Kansas Gambling Survey determined that nearly 3% of Kansas adults are considered high risk for suffering from a gambling disorder. This population is 10x more likely to attempt suicide and the co-occurring rates for mental illness and substance use disorders is significant. In addition, seniors and our youth are also vulnerable to gambling problems. Unfortunately, many of these problems go undetected for years until the problem has progressed to the point of criminal activity, bankruptcy and suicide. KAAP believes that everyone who profits from sports betting bears responsibility for addressing gambling problems. The only way to maximize benefits from sports betting is to minimize problem gambling.

The addition of sports betting into our state will bring an unprecedented blitz of advertising to urge Kansans to bet instantly from their phone on every action by every player on every play in every game in every sport. The expansion of legalized sports gambling in Kansas will likely increase gambling participation and simultaneously increase problems. The dangers of this intersection of advertising, access, and action posed to Kansans can be mitigated though with an investment in prevention and treatment programs. A 2018 report from the National Council on

Problem Gambling found that 60% of Kansans believe that the gambling industry and the government should do more to help people with a gambling addiction. Specifically, 57% indicated that if sports betting was to be legalized, revenues from sports betting revenues should be set aside for public awareness campaigns and to treat individuals who develop gambling problems.

The National Council on Problem Gambling 2016 survey of Problem Gambling Services found that the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) had a budget of \$889,198 for problem gambling services. This is roughly \$0.31 per capita. As such, Kansas ranked 16th out of the 40 states that receive public funding and was slightly below the \$0.37 per capita average spending and far below the highest funded state (Delaware, at \$1.46 per capita.)

Recommendation:

We urge the committee to adopt the Senate amendment that specifically directs at least 2% of net revenues be allocated from sports betting into the Problem Gambling and Addiction Fund. In addition, the amendment also fixes the original statutory language to ensure that all revenues into that fund be allocated for problem gambling and other addictions and for no other governmental purpose. When the Kansas legislature expanded gaming in 2007, they recognized the importance of addressing not only problem gambling but also the need to address long standing funding deficits which exist in the alcohol and drug system. These service gaps were fully articulated in the 2020 Mental Health Modernization and Reform Committee as well as the 2018 Governor's Substance Use Disorder Task Force. This bill, as amended, would begin to address those long-standing deficits.

Thank you for your time and consideration.