

627 SW Topeka Blvd | Topeka, KS 66603



Proponent Testimony on HB2340 - Written Only

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

March 20, 2023

Chair Gossage, Vice Chair Erickson, Ranking Member Pettey, and Members of the Committee, my name is Rachel Marsh, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 19 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2340 as amended.

Kansas continues to face a significant shortage of behavioral health professionals. This has resulted in lack of staff at psychiatric residential treatment facilities (PRTFs), which reduces operational capacity and increases waitlists for foster youth. The lack of professionals further creates gaps in services for children and families as our community partners face the same workforce challenges. These shortages contribute to high caseloads, reduced client treatment contact, and high turnover for therapists, regardless of where they are employed. Kansas's chronic behavioral health workforce shortage negatively impacts children and families in the child welfare system.

We support HB2340 as amended to streamline licensed professionals into the Kansas workforce and build service capacity for children and families in need. HB2340 as amended will:

- 1) Place Kansas in a position to enter compacts with other states
- 2) Attract licensed professionals from out of state
- 3) Encourage Kansas professionals to stay in Kansas

Thank you for your consideration of HB2340 as amended as an important step to addressing the shortage of behavioral health professionals in Kansas.

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Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:

CALM, Emporia	KVC Kansas, Olathe
Cornerstones of Care, Kansas City	KidsTLC, Olathe
DCCCA, Lawrence	Restoration Family Services, Wichita
Eckerd Connects, Wichita	Saint Francis Ministries, Salina
EmberHope, Wichita	TFI Family Services, Topeka
Florence Crittenton, Topeka	O'Connell Children's Shelter, Lawrence
FosterAdopt Connect, Olathe	The Villages, Topeka
Foster the Cause, Topeka	Wichita Children's Home, Wichita
Gathered, Derby	Zoe's House, Kansas City
Great Circle, Lawrence	