



To: Chairman Bob Bethell, and Members,  
House Aging and Long Term Care Committee  
From: Debra Zehr, President  
Date: Tuesday, February 1, 2011

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2047

Thank you, Chairman Bethell and Members of the Committee. I am Debra Zehr, President of the Kansas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (KAHSA). We represent 160 not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living facilities, low income housing and community-based service programs that serve more than 20,000 older Kansans every day.

KAHSA stands in support of House Bill 2047, which calls for the Kansas Department on Aging to administer a statewide program, in collaboration with the Area Agencies on Aging and mental health centers, to provide mental health education, outreach and services to older Kansans regardless of their place of residence.

Older Kansans experience high rates of depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges, putting them at increased risk for physical health problems, premature institutionalization and suicide. Yet they are disproportionately underserved due to transportation problems, lack of availability of specialized services and stigma.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to the important issue of mental health service access for older Kansans. I am happy to answer questions.

785.233.7443  
kahsainfo@kahsa.org

HOUSE AGING & LTC  
DATE: 2/8/11  
ATTACHMENT # 13

13-1