



Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.

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Testimony to Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare on Senate Bill 210

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Madame Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Colin Thomasset, I am the Policy Director for the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas, Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 210.

The Association represents the 27 licensed Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas who provide home and community-based, as well as outpatient mental health services in all 105 counties in Kansas, 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, collectively serving over 127,000 Kansans with mental illness.

The exchanging of health information in Kansas has undergone a transformation since the passage of the Kansas Health Information Technology and Exchange Act legislation in 2011. Kansas took a step forward with that legislation and the Association believes that Senate Bill 210 is another step in the right direction. Under Senate Bill 210, the regulatory authority would move from the Kansas Health Information Exchange (KHIE) to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. This transfer of authority would result in a substantial reduction of costs and create a more efficient regulatory structure.

The Association believes that health information exchange will provide increased safety and health care efficacy for our consumers. Right now, we have numerous CMHCs in the planning stages of sharing health information, and we expect that these will "go live" by the end of the year. We anticipate that we will have many more CMHCs follow suit next year as we continue to integrate our mental health and substance abuse services with physical health care.

When Governor Mark Parkinson issued the Executive Order creating the KHIE, he created a 17-member board of directors with a diverse array of experience, and notably absent was representation from the mental health community. Senate Bill 210 creates a 22-member advisory council on health information technology and also does not explicitly include a board member from the mental health community.

Given that CMHCs will be key partners in health information exchange with physicians and hospitals, and the emphasis that is being placed on mental health by KanCare and the Governor's Mental Health Initiative, we feel that the mental health community should have a seat at the table. We would respectfully request that before Senate Bill 210 is acted upon, that an amendment be included allowing for a representative of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas to be a voting member of the advisory council.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you and we appreciate your consideration of our comments.

- 1 (1) *The secretary of the Kansas department of health and*
 2 *environment, or such secretary's designee;*
 3 (2) *the governor of the state of Kansas, or such governor's designee;*
 4 (3) *four legislators selected as follows: The chairperson and ranking*
 5 *minority member or their designees of the committee on health and human*
 6 *services of the house of representatives, and the chairperson and ranking*
 7 *minority member or their designees from the committee on public health*
 8 *and welfare of the senate;*
 9 (4) *two members appointed by the secretary who represent*
 10 *consumers;*
 11 (5) *one member appointed by the secretary who represents*
 12 *employers;*
 13 (6) *one member appointed by the secretary who represents payers;*
 14 (7) *two members appointed by the secretary who represent local*
 15 *health departments from a list of three names submitted by the Kansas*
 16 *association of local health departments;*
 17 (8) *three members appointed by the secretary who represent*
 18 *hospitals, from a list of three names for each position submitted by the*
 19 *Kansas hospital association. One of the hospital representatives appointed*
 20 *herein shall be involved in the administration of a critical access hospital;*
 21 (9) *three members appointed by the secretary from a list of three*
 22 *names for each position by the Kansas medical society. At least two of the*
 23 *members appointed herein shall be practicing physicians, and one of the*
 24 *physicians shall be a physician in a primary care specialty;*
 25 (10) *two members appointed by the secretary who represent*
 26 *pharmacists, from a list of three names submitted by the Kansas*
 27 *pharmacists association. At least one of the members appointed herein*
 28 *shall be a practicing pharmacist;*
 29 (11) *one member shall be a representative of the university of Kansas*
 30 *center for health information; and*
 31 (12) *one member shall be a representative of the Kansas foundation*
 32 *for medical care.*
 33 (c) *At the first meeting of the council, following the effective date of*
 34 *this act, terms of its members, except the secretary and governor or their*
 35 *designees, shall be determined by lot with five members serving for one*
 36 *year, five members serving for two years, five members serving for three*
 37 *years, and five members serving for four years. Following their initial*
 38 *term, members of the council shall be eligible for re-appointment and, if*
 39 *re-appointed, shall serve for terms of four years. Members shall only be*
 40 *eligible to serve two consecutive four-year terms. Whenever a vacancy*
 41 *occurs regarding a member of the council due to the resignation, death,*
 42 *removal or expiration of a term, a new member shall be appointed prior to*
 43 *the next meeting, according to the process and to the specific position on*

(13) one member shall be a representative of the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas.