



CENTRAL KANSAS FOUNDATION

*Offering hope and healing
from addiction since 1967.*

Testimony to House Health and Human Services Committee

House Bill 2206

February 16, 2017

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Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am Les Sperling, CEO of the Central Kansas Foundation (CKF) based in Salina, Kansas. Our organization has been providing quality and affordable Substance Use Disorder (SUD), Prevention and Treatment services to the citizens of Kansas for the last 50 years.

Telehealth technology has been utilized daily by our organization since 2008 and now functions as an essential service. Utilization of telehealth services has improved access to quality care and to services which would otherwise not be available at all to our patients. These include:

- Access to Addiction Psychiatry
- Access to medical consultation
- Access to immediate assessment and placement services
- Access to SUD expertise by Emergency Departments and acute care hospitals
- Access to individual and group counseling for patients in frontier areas of Kansas

Most private and government payers currently reimburse us for our telehealth services. We appreciate the language in HB 2206 that will bring clarity and consistency to the rules and regulations governing delivery of these services and we are hopeful that this clarity will translate to expanded access to care for the citizens of Kansas.

With the passage of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) in 2008, mental health and substance use disorder services are mandated to receive treatment equal to medical benefits in most health insurance plans. While mental health and substance use disorder providers are not specifically mentioned in HB 2206, it is our hope that the intent is to include these important health care providers in the benefits of the bill.

If that is not the case, I would respectfully ask the Committee to consider adding specific language to include mental health and substance use disorder professionals. Should this professional workforce not be included, a potential unintended consequence could be that services currently provided and reimbursed in Kansas could be viewed as unauthorized by payers and removed from the array of services essential to the health of Kansans.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and I am happy to stand for questions.

Les Sperling
CEO