

Testimony to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice.

House Bill #2033 “Changing the criteria used to refer and admit juveniles to a juvenile crisis intervention center”

Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Tim DeWeese. I am the Director of Johnson County Mental Health Center. Johnson County Mental Health Center began operation in 1962 providing outpatient services in one location. Today, mental health services are provided in five separate facilities located throughout the county. The Mental Health Center is a department of County Government and is licensed by the State of Kansas as a Community Mental Health Center and has earned accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International. Additionally, the mental health center was recently certified as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). We have more than 400 staff members who provide a wide range of mental health and substance abuse services to more than 12,000 county residents annually. Operations are overseen by the Board of County Commissioners and its day-to-day operations are managed by an Executive Leadership Team that reports to the Assistant County Manager as well as a 13-member Advisory Board appointed by the Board of County Commissioners.

I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony in **support** of this bill which would change the criteria used to refer and admit juveniles to a juvenile crisis intervention center. We believe a juvenile crisis intervention center has a place in our crisis continuum of care for children and their families. To better serve children and families, we propose amending the current law. The term “mental health” crisis is too narrow to adequately respond to the needs of children and families and does not include substance use disorders. Replacing it with the term “behavioral health” encompasses the full spectrum of frequently encountered mental health, substance use, and other dysregulated behavior. The final determination of what constitutes a behavioral health crisis should remain with a qualified and licensed mental health professional based on their clinical judgment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and let me know if you have questions or need additional information.