

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



March 6, 2023

TESTIMONY OF

Deputy Secretary Tanya Keys

Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

Mental Health and Foster Care

Chair

Representative Concannon

Vice Chair

Representative Johnson

Ranking Minority

Representative Ousley

and

Members of the Committee

Chairwoman Concannon and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on the topic of Foster Care and Mental Health. Both the Department for Children and Families and Department for Aging and Disability Services provide an array of Mental Health programs that offer services for children in the care of the Secretary.

DCF/CARELON FAMILY CRISIS MOBILE HELPLINE

DCF launched our Family Mobile Crisis Helpline through our contract with Carelon in Oct. 2021. The helpline ensures Kansas children and young adults between 0-20, have access to a comprehensive crisis system that anticipates needs and provides recovery-focused interventions in all phases of the crisis continuum. The crisis is defined by the person calling. The centralized behavioral health crisis service includes on-the-phone or in-person rapid community-based mobile crisis intervention services; hotline with 24 hour a day, seven days a week assessment and screening, and up to eight weeks of stabilization services and connection to community-based referrals and services.

During this second year we have focused on marketing of the helpline and co-branding the helpline materials with Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, Kansas Department of Corrections, Association of CMHC'S of Kansas, Kansas Department of Education and Kansas Children's Service League. We will continue to seek co-branding with additional entities such as: NAMI, Kansas Suicide Prevention HQ and KS KidsMap. The marketing of the helpline is through social media ads, Google Display Ads, and newspaper ads.

In late 2022, DCF developed a crisis services training to dispense crisis services available in the 26 CMHC catchment areas for foster parents, kinship, and non-related kinship. Through 2023-2024, the training will be taken across the state to all 26 CMHC areas.

In 2022 shows a total of 494 total calls to the Crisis Helpline. Of that total 494:

- 120 calls regarded youth in DCF care
- 432 calls received phone assistance
- 62 calls received Mobile Response services by a CMHC

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONIST

DCF is working with KDHE and KDADS to create Medicaid funding for Children's Behavioral Interventionist services for youth aged 3-21 through neuro-developmental activities for individuals/families that are struggling with behavioral and emotional dysregulation through a child and family centered treatment plan. Assistance is provided with developing redirection skills and in the teaching of positive behaviors. The active engagement of the CBI provider in neuro-stimulating activities assists in rewiring neuropathways in the brain. The goal is for the child/youth to live safely in the home setting and increase their behavioral function appropriately in daily living activities. These services are provided to assist in preventing hospital or institutional treatment.

THERAPEUTIC FAMILY FOSTER HOME (TFFH)

DCF continues to strive to identify alternatives to group/congregate care through Families Over Facilities. DCF launched the Therapeutic Family Foster Home (TFFH), level of care in July 2022. The Kansas TFFH Program is guided by the National Program Standards of the Family Focused Treatment Association. These are family homes which provide 24-hour care for out-of-home children and youth with high acuity needs with a goal to meet their safety and well-being needs in the community outside of a hospital or residential facility. These specialty homes are limited to no more than 2 children and are required to complete more targeted and child-tailored annual training than the basic and intensive family foster parents. These homes are provided enhanced support through the Child Placing Agency and the Child Welfare Case Management Providers to ensure optimal success in the program. DCF currently licensed 12 Therapeutic Family Foster Homes.

KDADS COLLABORATION AND 988 LAUNCH

988 is now the three-digit dialing code connecting people to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline), where confidential, compassionate, accessible care and support are available for anyone experiencing a mental health-related crisis – whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis or any other kind of emotional distress.

988 Lifeline routes callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) using their area code. Kansas currently has three certified call centers with one addition in the process. These call centers are Comcare of Sedgwick County, Johnson County Mental Health Center, Kansas Suicide Prevention Headquarters, and soon to be Wyandot Behavioral Health Network. Kansas also has one in-state backup center with HealthSource Integrated Solutions. All National Suicide Prevention Lifelines are open with caring individuals ready to answer calls, chats, or texts at any time 24/7.

DCF/KDADS are jointly contracting to advertise at Kansas State football games and University of Kansas basketball games. The advertising includes stadium ads, television and radio commercials, YouTube presence and print ads in booklets distributed at the games.

Kansas has produced excellent outcomes during the first 6 months of 988 implementation and is currently answering approximately 91% of 988 calls in-state.

KDADS continues to work on developing additional community mental health resources in partnership with KDHE and DCF. Changes are specific to improving access to the system of care, while other initiatives are focused on developing state infrastructure to support better outcomes for treatment and recovery. Kansas, like other states in the country, continues to experience a crisis in children's mental health, where the increased demand for services has far outpaced the growth of the provider system. KDADS has made progress on improving the children's system of care by strategically focusing on policy changes, budget enhancements, and federal technical assistance.

As part of these efforts, KDADS continues to support DCF in the prioritization of foster care youth intake and services through the CMHC network to allow for a more rapid response. The referral process for foster care youth

to both outpatient and inpatient services continues to be reviewed and adjusted. Foster care youth continue to be actively tracked and reviewed through complex case staffing's with state behavioral health leadership and the MCOs. Additionally, KSDE continues to work with CMHCs to expand the Mental Health in Schools programs. Below are some of the accomplishments of this administration and the collaborative planning processes KDADS has been directly involved in supporting or implementing.

KVC recently opened a new Acute hospital in Hays, Kansas and a new contract related to the opening of a PRTF adjacent to the new Acute facility, both will provide needed services to western Kansas area. The facility will have 14 beds for youth/children.

KDADS is currently working to support and increase services related to crisis intervention and respite services for children. This would include working with Compass Mental Health Center to expand the services currently provided at Haven House in Dodge City. The Crisis program at the Family Service and Guidance Center, that is partially funded by KDADS, broke ground recently on a new facility that will host multiple services for children and teens who are experiencing severe mental health crises. These services include a program for adolescents who struggle with substance abuse disorders. The Governor's FY 23 budget includes an increase of \$1.0 million to expand crisis respite centers in the KDADS budget.

KDADS has been working to improve access to care at PRTFs. As part of that effort KDADS has worked with PRTF providers to expand PRTF programming and facilities. Kansas currently has a total licensed capacity of 424 PRTF beds, that number was at 336 in June of 2020. In accordance with statute S.B. 66 (FY 2020), the State of Kansas is working towards increasing the access for children in need of a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) in Kansas. Ember Hope is a 2-year pilot project funded in FY22 and FY23 is opening a new PRTF for female youth, ages 12-18 in parental custody, to serve Newton, KS, and surrounding area within a radius of 60 miles, and to implement recommendations from the NRI PRTF report to determine if the additional enhancements should be added to the KanCare cost reports for all PRTFs in Kansas. KDADS is continuing to explore ways to enhance the PRTF system to meet demands for the service within the state. KDADS continues to work on finalizing the draft of the PRTF Guidelines from the process improvement workgroup. Current plans are to meet and have them finalized soon.

KDADS has worked to develop both policies and a State Plan amendment to allow family therapy to be billed to the child's Medicaid MCO without the child being present. When a child being treated, it's usually with the expectation that intervention in their family interactions will improve their emotional or behavioral disturbances. The policy changes will allow the therapist to work directly with family members to correct, through psychotherapeutic techniques, the patient's interaction with them.

KDADS has added a full time State Suicide Prevention Coordinator ("SPC") to its staff. The position facilitates the implementation of suicide prevention strategies at a state level through education, monitoring, and coordination of statewide activities. The position is responsible for building and maintaining effective working relationships amongst several agencies and organizations including federal, state, and local governments, community-based organizations, the suicide prevention crisis lifeline, Attorney General's office, and Veteran Service Organizations