



Kansas Association of Local Health Departments
715 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612
Phone: 785-271-8391
www.kalhd.org

Healthy People Build Strong Communities

Testimony of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) to the

House Insurance Committee

Proponent for HB 2459 • February 6, 2020

Chairman Vickrey and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of House Bill 2459 regarding limits on utilization review conducted by health plans under certain circumstances involving the treatment of mental illness or substance abuse disorder. KALHD is a nonprofit association dedicated to strengthening local health departments for the purpose of improving and protecting the health of all Kansans.

KALHD believes HB 2459 will make noteworthy strides for patients who are actively suicidal, are afflicted with suicidal ideation, or have a substance use disorder. In all three instances these patients are in a very vulnerable state. Immediate treatment is paramount to see positive outcomes. KALHD believes that funding for treatment is a critical component of the behavioral health system. HB 2459 helps address this by removing barriers related to concurrent review, prior authorization, and retrospective review. This means patients in need can avoid worrying about whether they can afford to seek help and instead go about getting the help they need, confident that their insurance provider will cover the necessary expense.

Insurance is just one small part of the behavioral health system, but it is an important component. HB 2459 makes strides in timely treatment by removing the delays associated with utilization review while still protecting the patient financially (by mandating coverage instead of leaving the patient to simply hope their insurance will do the right thing). It is for these reasons that KALHD supports HB 2459 and asks that you recommend it favorably.

Respectfully,

Dennis Kriesel

Executive Director, Kansas Association of Local Health Departments