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**TESTIMONY ON HB 2160
TO THE HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 4, 2021
WALTER HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HIGH PLAINS MENTAL HEALTH CENTER**

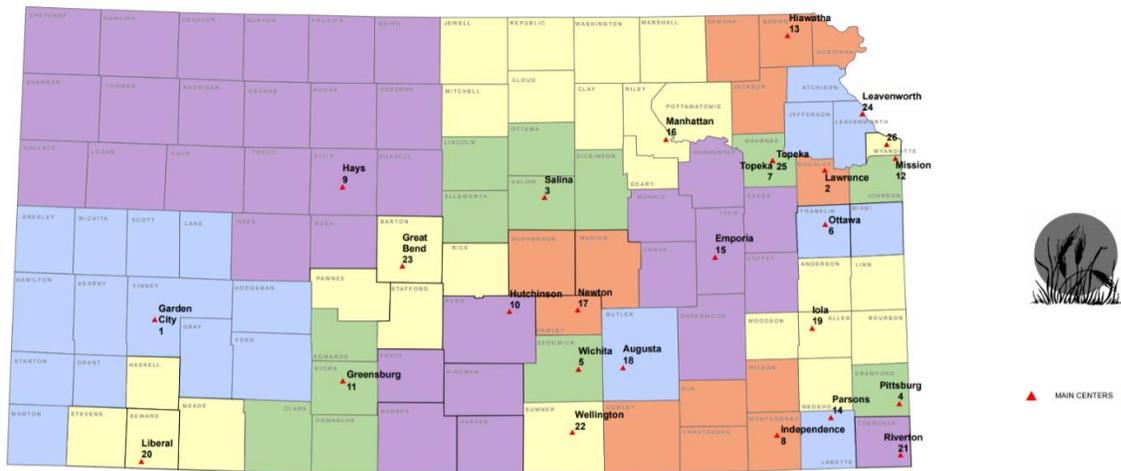
Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the Committee, my name is Walter Hill. I serve as the Executive Director of High Plains Mental Health, the Participating Licensed Community Mental Health Center for our 20-county region of Northwest Kansas. My 42-year clinical and management career in behavioral health has been in Northwest, rural, and frontier Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB2160 and to offer information and our perspective on the opportunity for the State of Kansas in laying the groundwork for a mechanism to implement Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs).

High Plains has served the 20-county region of Northwest Kansas for over 55 years, providing a broad array of mental health services. As other states in the U.S., including our neighbors, have raised the bar for mental health services by developing systems of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, High Plains is preparing to apply for a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that would allow us to implement the CCBHC model and to provide this exciting new standard of community behavioral health.

Each year, High Plains provides \$10 million of services to over 6,500 patients in this 20-county region, through our 140 staff. Services include statutory gatekeeping screens to state mental health hospitals, short-term overnight adult crisis stabilization beds, youth professional family resource homes, Westside School, outpatient therapy, and psychiatric medication management services. Though we have full time offices in five branch office communities, and four office buildings in Hays, we also provide weekly outreach clinics in each of the other counties. In addition, for a number of years, we have maintained an extensive network of telemedicine sites

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in most of the community hospitals and county jails in our region to extend our reach both geographically and for rapid access in emergencies.

Codifying a system of CCBHCs recognized in Kansas would allow for increased resources for a variety of our most needy Kansas citizens, including seriously mentally ill adults, veterans, severely emotionally disturbed youth, and those with substance use disorders and dual substance use and mental disorders.

High Plains is in the process of submitting a plan for a large SAMHSA CCBHC grant to transform our Center to a CCBHC focusing on the following goals:

1. Taking the lead in the delivery of substance abuse services and dual disorder (SUD and mental health) in our Northwest region, including Medication Assisted Treatment
2. Developing a broad-based model of integrated care for all of our patients to support whole person health

3. Being a center of excellence in delivery of service to veterans, with the majority of treatment staff trained as certified veteran/military therapists
4. Developing increased outreach to various groups in our region with support, training, and engagement, including veterans, the agricultural community, the Hispanic community, and those living in poverty

In closing, Kansas has the opportunity with this bill to support these and other developments across the state to truly strengthen our community mental health system to better meet the needs of the communities we serve. Thank you for your consideration.