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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

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Governor Laura Kelly Announces Partnership to Bring Youth Psychiatric Hospital to Hays

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly announced today that the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) has reached a contract agreement with KVC Hospitals (KVC) to open a modern acute psychiatric hospital in Hays to meet the needs of youth in western Kansas.

The contract, effective July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2027, specifies admissions will begin in 2023 at a licensed 14-bed treatment center for youth up to 18 years to include up to 10 no-eject no-reject State Institutional Alternative (SIA) beds focused on patients from the Larned State Hospital (LSH) catchment area.

“My administration is committed to protecting our vulnerable children, and ensuring they have access to the services they need to keep them safe, healthy, and on a path to be successful,” **Governor Kelly said.** “This facility will provide critical mental health services in an under-served region of our state – and it will go a long way in our efforts to keep our kids safe. My administration is committed to making continued improvements like these for all Kansans kids.”

KVC previously provided inpatient youth psychiatric hospitalization services in Hays for nearly a decade from 2010-2019 following the closure of the children’s’ hospital on the campus of LSH. During that time KVC served thousands of children and families.

Inpatient Acute Treatment Includes:

- Full medical, clinical and nursing assessment within the first 24 hours of admission
- Intensive psychiatric care and medication management
- Individual, family and group therapy sessions
- Case coordination
- 24/7 Support and supervision from KVC’s skilled nursing staff
- Innovative treatment and education to teach youth about their brains and how to regulate their emotions

“We are grateful for the opportunity to expand our services to Hays and surrounding areas so that we can touch the lives of more children when they need it most,” **said Bobby Eklofe, President of KVC**

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Hospitals. “As we continue to see increasing numbers of youth in crisis with more severe symptoms, these services are needed in Hays now more than ever before.”

KDADS led an effort supported by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund and the Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute (CEI) to engage and convene stakeholders in western Kansas to identify communities able to house acute psychiatric hospitalization services, as well as strategies to overcome the barrier of sustaining adequate staffing for these services.

In a series of four stakeholder meetings held in 2020 in Hays, Goodland, Garden City and Dodge City, 84 stakeholders participated in the conversation from organizations such as community mental health centers, health departments, law enforcement organizations, hospitals, community service organizations, schools and more. Hays was the top-voted community for sustainability and success.

“This announcement comes at a time of critical consequence surrounding the issue of children’s psychiatric services,” **KDADS Secretary Laura Howard said.** “This expansion will help reduce wait times and make access to care for children in crisis more easily and readily available.”

About KVC

KVC Hospitals is a network of nonprofit children’s psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers serving youth who are struggling with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, the impacts of trauma, and other behavioral health needs. The goal of treatment is to help each child stabilize the crisis they are experiencing and return home as soon as safely possible, equipped with the skills, support, and resources they need to continue treatment in their community. For 30 years, KVC has provided a safe, healing space for over 28,000 youth admissions with a patient-centered approach that works to help heal the whole family unit.

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