



FAMILY SERVICE &  
GUIDANCE CENTER

**Proponent Testimony to House K-12 Education Budget Committee**  
**HB 2444 Establishing the Mental Health Intervention Team Program in Statute**  
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Chair Williams and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2444. My name is Kathy Mosher, and I am the CEO of Family Service and Guidance Center, which is one of the 26 Community Mental Health Centers in Kansas. We specialize in serving children and families in the Topeka and Shawnee County community.

The Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) program has been one of the best and most cost-efficient ways to improve access to behavioral health services in Shawnee County. We collaborated with our school districts to expand access to mental health care for youth who **needed** mental health services but who were **not in services**.

- In 2022, for example, our school partners did a great job of identifying 371 kids who were falling through the cracks, and now they are receiving services. This program works.

HB 2444 could help us do more and be more effective. Take this example: Through the MHIT yearly application process, our schools decide at what level to participate each June when the application is due. At that time, we learn what the need is and we have two months to locate, recruit, and train staff to meet that need when school starts in August.

- In 2022, for instance, we doubled the program in Shawnee County by increasing from 4 therapists to 10 therapists in schools in Shawnee County.
- We added on-site school services in a total of 23 schools.
- We served 52% more students than the previous year.
- These partnerships resulted in expanding other needed services, too, such as our Social Emotional Skill Building Groups to 8 more schools; that is 62% more students from the previous year.

Another benefit of the program is that Family Service and Guidance Center does not close when schools close. We offer 24/7 crisis response. In the last quarter of 2022, 98% of youth needing crisis intervention were served within 3 hours. After a crisis intervention, youth had follow-up therapy appointments within 72 hours.

With HB 2444, we could do much more. We would not be restricted to short-term goals. Long-range planning would allow us to use the dollars invested in a more sustainable way and increase our ability to recruit the necessary workforce because they would not be annual grant positions.

The schools are the experts in education, and Family Service and Guidance Center, and other community mental health centers across the state, are the experts in mental health, and we both serve youth and families. By pooling our resources together in 2022, we saved the state money by not duplicating staff or services at the taxpayers' expense, and 99% of our clients and families said they would recommend us to others. It does not get better than that.

In conclusion, we support HB2444 as the best value for each dollar invested, the best way to make mental health service more accessible for youth, the best way to catch youth falling through the cracks, and the best outcomes for the lowest cost.