

Kansas Advocacy Issue

# Providing Adequate Mental Health and Behavioral Health Care

## Action Needed

The availability of inpatient care for voluntary and involuntary patients is crucial for the well-being of Kansans. Providers need to have beds readily available for mental health patients and those dealing with Substance Use Disorders. The Kansas Hospital Association urges the legislature to implement the recommendations presented in the final report of the Mental Health Task Force. These recommendations include expanding KanCare coverage and providing adequate funding for current and future mental and behavioral health treatment centers.

Despite the challenges that COVID-19 has created for the behavioral health system, every effort should be made to lift the moratorium at Osawatome State Hospital entirely by July of 2022, under the plan approved by the 2020 Legislature.

Due to the moratorium and the lack of voluntary and involuntary beds, Kansas hospitals continue to house patients in their emergency departments for several days while awaiting transfer to Osawatome State Hospital.

In January 2019, the Mental Health Task Force provided its final report to the legislature. This report contains numerous recommendations which improve the care of mental health and behavioral health patients who suffer from Substance Use Disorders.

To cover the assessment, care, treatment and aftercare for many uninsured and underinsured Kansans dealing with mental and behavioral health issues, expansion of KanCare remains an urgent need as well.

As Kansas has seen increased mental health impacts in both rural and urban parts of the state and as the state experiences the effects of social isolation through COVID-19, it is imperative the state provide adequate financing to increase the number of voluntary and involuntary inpatient beds and fund new facilities, such as crisis stabilization centers.

Bottom Line:

Critical steps must be taken to address individuals in mental health or substance abuse crises. These steps include lifting the 2015 moratorium, expanding services and increasing funding for behavioral /mental health care in Kansas.



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