

KANSAS MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

.....Speaking with one voice to meet the critical needs of people with mental illness

Children and Mental Health in Kansas

Position: The Legislature must adopt a budget supporting statewide services for all children who need health, mental health, and substance abuse care. Parents must receive the care they need at accessible times and locations to keep their children at home and in community schools.

The Problem: Many parents are underinsured or uninsured. Parents often cannot find services or cannot afford them when they are available. Parents struggle with the new managed care systems initiated in 2013 and scramble to secure services when funds have been cut to agencies providing those services. As many as 70,000 (10%) Kansas children under 18 have emotional/behavioral problems. Around 5% or 35,000 have SED, or Serious Emotional Disturbance, requiring services that may include hospitalization and/or residential treatment. National data suggests that about half of these children do not receive the care they need.

As many as 70,000 Kansas children under the age of 18 live with serious emotional disturbance....These children are at risk for school dropout or expulsion, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and out-of-home placements such as foster care or incarceration in juvenile detention.

Why this matters: Children with SED are at great risk for school dropout, expulsion, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, foster care and incarceration in juvenile detention facilities. When services are not available or do not work, parents may lose custody of their children. The child may lose his/her family, school, or home. Parents and children can learn to manage symptoms and navigate the service arena with quality services, parent information, and peer support, so children can remain in the most cost effective placement, their own home and local school.

The bottom line: Kansans value the right of children to live with their family, in their home community and attend their neighborhood school. We ask the Legislature to:

- Maintain Home and Community Based Services and funding for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs).
- Maintain parent education and support so families learn how to manage their children's symptoms and access services throughout the continuum of care.
- Increase training for parents, teachers and service providers to identify mental illness; provide evidence based services, such as wraparound and positive behavior supports.
- Expand regional crisis services so families can participate in treatment with their child.
- Return funds for family centered system of care to community mental health centers.

Need more information? Drill deeper into this issue on the back of this page.

The rest of the story about children's mental health in Kansas

Parents struggling to cope with service systems and options may be angry, isolated, frustrated, and feel blame. These parents need information about available models of care, help in evaluating these models to determine if they are appropriate for their child, and in helping the child apply his/her treatment to improve their life at home and in the community may be required. Help to evaluate the treatments' impact, in all locations, and aid in working with teachers, and participating in school planning meetings are also needed. More information on the overall health of Kansas children can be found in The State of America's Children® 2014 Report. On a state-by-state basis, the report provides key child data showing alarming numbers of children at risk.

Securing mental health services for Kansas children/adolescents is difficult, in part, because of the many systems that offer them and recent legislative funding cuts to programs in these agencies.

Five state agencies provide services and oversight regulations for children who have mental illness:

- 1) Department of Children and Families (DCF): transition services through their vocational rehabilitation programs, oversees custody relinquishment and foster care.
- 2) Juvenile Justice Authority (JJA): children (10 and older) with mental illness in both institutional and community oversight programs; The Governor's Budget puts Juvenile Justice under the Department of Corrections.
- 3) Department of Health and Environment (KDHE): children with disabilities aged 0-3, and Medicaid oversight through KanCare managed care organizations: Amerigroup, Sunflower and United.
- 4) Department of Aging and Disability Services (KDADS): monitor the 27 community mental health services for children and Medicaid waiver programs (HCBS for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF), and autism. The Governor's Budget repurposes \$10 million dollars (\$4.9 million from the Family Centered System of Care funds to new initiatives).
- 5) Department of Education (KSDE): school age children with SED if the mental illness interferes with a child's ability to function in academic settings. The Kansas Supreme Court finds that schools are underfunded.

The Coalition supports state and community level collaboration and planning among these agencies with funding for the services listed above; and increased training of teachers and community providers to expand experienced staff to improve the lives of children who experience mental illness and their families.