

KANSAS MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

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

Adult Psychiatric Inpatient Services: The State Hospitals Crisis

Position: The Kansas Legislature should support and fully fund high-quality psychiatric inpatient services to meet the needs of all Kansans who require this care. Specifically, the Legislature should: 1) End the moratorium by immediately increasing inpatient psychiatric capacity for voluntary and involuntary admissions as recommended by the Mental Health Task Force Report (36-60 beds within 24 months) and investing in the current state hospitals (see the back of this page for the Governor's Plan), 2) Fund Regional Crisis Locations including co-located substance use disorder (SUD) services. 3) Submit Federal Waiver Application for the IMD Exclusion rule to maximize federal funds. 4) Provide for continued public/private partnerships for regional psychiatric inpatient beds. 5) Implement the recommendations of the 2019 Mental Health Task Force Report.*

Whether public or private, underfunded hospital facilities are not safe for patients or staff and do not produce lasting recovery.

The problem: The state's psychiatric inpatient system is broken. Simply put, it does not have the capacity to meet the current demand to serve Kansans who need inpatient treatment. Osawatomie State Hospital has lost its CMS certification for the majority of the hospital. Adair Acute Care at Osawatomie is the acute care 60 bed unit that has recently been recertified and must operate as an independent hospital. The fact is, mental health advocates have been warning of the potential crisis for more than ten years, and needed investments in facilities, technology, training and salaries have been repeatedly delayed. The November 2019 negative survey at Osawatomie State Hospital confirms that our hospitals need ongoing attention and quality management.

Why this matters: Of those who use our state hospitals, more than 70 percent do not have Medicaid or other forms of reimbursement, limiting their access to private hospital beds. All this underscores the need to support a state mental health hospital system as a safety net for those who experience a mental health crisis. Without that safety net, many of these individuals regularly interact with law enforcement or are seen in emergency rooms, shifting the cost to other systems. Whether public or private, underfunded inpatient facilities are not safe for patients or staff and they do not produce lasting recovery for patients, so we cannot reallocate hospital funding without jeopardizing lives. The moratorium on admissions means that people who are in crisis and at risk of harming themselves or others must wait for needed treatment. There are no voluntary admissions under the moratorium, so every case must go through the legal process for involuntary commitment. Kansas law enforcement organizations and community hospitals identify the moratorium at Osawatomie State Hospital as a crisis that must be resolved as soon as possible. And now, they report that dozens of individuals who have been involuntarily committed are being rejected by the state hospital due to their diagnosis or unrelated medical conditions. If indeed our state hospitals cannot serve these individuals, we must provide a resource that can. This system is far from providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

The bottom line: The Mental Health Task Force Report asserts that inpatient capacity must expand at the state hospitals and regionally. Community based programs must also be a part of the solution. The hospitals need investments in staff, training, and new facilities, paired with effective community strategies.

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

The rest of the story – A Plan to End the Moratorium

Governor’s Budget Proposal: In January 2020, the Department for Aging and Disability Services released a Plan to end the Moratorium at Osawatomie. The plan falls short of the Mental Health Task Force recommendations, but it is, at last, a plan that can improve this crisis by ending the moratorium at Osawatomie and allowing voluntary admissions.

The Kansas Mental Health Coalition supports the Governor’s proposal to end the moratorium on admissions at Osawatomie State Hospital by adding capacity at Osawatomie State Hospital by remodeling the Biddle building to add a new 14 bed unit and adding regional beds through private contracts by adding \$5 million. This plan includes reorganizing Adair Acute Care to change the double occupancy rooms to single occupancy, which will improve the therapeutic use of the unit and allow for higher daily census numbers once finished. We recommend the State go further to speed these solutions, add inpatient and crisis resources for youth throughout the state, and invest in the hospital workforce through wages and training. It is worth noting, the agency initially requested funds to open an additional 26 bed unit, and that would have been closer to the Mental Health Task Force recommendation.

Number of Beds: The 2018 report of the Mental Health Task Force included a recommendation to develop a plan to add more than 300 additional hospital beds for voluntary and involuntary admissions – or to create and expand alternatives that would reduce the number of new beds needed. The estimate was based upon an ideal ratio of state hospital beds per 100,000 people, which had been identified in a 2016 report from the Treatment Advocacy Center. The Task Force also called for a study to determine a Kansas-specific estimate of psychiatric inpatient beds needed for the system, and the 2018 Legislature directed KDADS to have the requested study completed. The next Task Force used the study results to develop its 2019 recommendation, which includes 1) maintaining at least all beds currently available in Larned and Osawatomie, 2) adding 36 to 60 regional or state hospital beds within two years, and 3) continuing to add regional or state hospital beds within five years to a total of up to 221 beds based on the findings of the study. However, the Task Force noted that the need for additional beds could be reduced if the state were to invest in the creation or expansion of alternatives, including many of the priority recommendations in this and prior reports.

Note: Currently, Osawatomie State Hospital has the staffing capacity to treat 174 patients, but only the Adair Acute Care beds (60) can receive federal funds.

Regionalization: The Task Force believes that Kansas must develop a more balanced system to address behavioral health needs in Kansas. To address the needs of the Kansas population statewide, a regional model should be developed to provide access closer to home for more patients. Regional short-term, acute-care facilities that accept both voluntary and involuntary admissions would allow the two state hospitals to dedicate more beds to longer-term inpatients.

To have a balanced system of care that provides appropriate access to treatment, the model developed must assure more services are available locally, including access to acute care. Both community and hospital services are needed, though different models may be used to provide the services. Further, evidence suggests that rural psychiatric inpatient units improve access to community-based mental health services.

Regional beds will not resolve our hospitals crisis as a stand alone strategy. Regional beds must be paired with additional staffing and capacity at our current state hospitals.