



Kansas Legislative Research Department

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To: 2021 Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform

From: Connor Stangler, Research Analyst

Re: Overview of the 2020 Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform

OVERVIEW OF THE 2020 SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON KANSAS MENTAL HEALTH MODERNIZATION AND REFORM

The 2020 Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform (Committee) was directed by the Legislative Coordinating Council to:

- Analyze the State's behavioral health system to ensure that both inpatient and outpatient services are accessible in communities;
- Review the capacity of current behavioral health workforce;
- Study the availability and capacity of crisis centers and substance abuse facilities;
- Assess the impact of recent changes to state policies on the treatment of individuals with behavioral health needs; and
- Make recommendations on steps needed to make Kansas a nationwide leader on behavioral health delivery, specifically focusing on how Kansas should modernize its behavioral health delivery system.

Committee Structure and Working Groups

The Committee was organized as a roundtable and was composed of legislative members and the following additional members:

- A Judicial Branch Court Services Officer recommended by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;

- A representative recommended by the Commissioner of Education;
- A Kansas Department of Health and Environment cabinet official recommended by the Governor;
- One sheriff and one chief of police recommended by the Attorney General;
- A Children’s Alliance of Kansas representative;
- A Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals drug and alcohol addiction treatment provider;
- An Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas (ACMHCK) representative with clinical or medical expertise;
- A Kansas Hospital Association representative with clinical or medical expertise;
- A person with lived experience with mental illness or who has provided assistance to an individual living with a mental illness recommended by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- A parent of a child with a mental illness recommended by the President of the Senate;
- A former or current superintendent of a Kansas state mental health hospital;
- A current Executive Director of a community mental health center recommended by ACMHCK;
- A health insurance company representative recommended by the Commissioner of Insurance;
- A Kansas County and District Attorneys Association representative;
- A Kansas Health Information Network representative;
- The Medicaid Director for the State of Kansas; and
- The Chairperson of the Governor’s Behavioral Health Services Planning Council.

The Kansas Health Institute (KHI) agreed to facilitate working groups and has agreed to do the same for the 2021 Special Committee.

The Committee determined working groups, consisting of roundtable members and *ad hoc* subject matter experts, would help serve the Committee’s purpose. The 2021 Special Committee on Mental Health Modernization and Reform will feature similar *ad hoc* membership,

with the addition of three judges. The Committee's Working Group Charter established three voluntary working groups. The Committee provided leadership to the working groups through guiding vision statements, identification of key performance indicators, and input on criteria by which to evaluate the recommendations' priorities. Legislative members of the Committee could volunteer to participate in the working groups' meetings as consultants with the goal of gathering information that could assist the working groups in identifying policy levers by which the aims identified by content experts could be achieved.

Initially, the Committee established three working groups:

- The Finance and Sustainability working group focused on monetary and human resources, and related topics including workforce, funding and accessibility, and community engagement;
- The Policy and Treatment working group focused on how to make the mental health system more effective, with particular emphasis on prevention, education, treatment, recovery, and special populations; and
- The System Capacity and Transformation working group considered what the mental health system could look like in the future and focused on data systems, interactions with the legal systems and law enforcement, and system transformation.

The Committee later created a Telehealth subgroup, featuring members from each working group, which met twice during November 2020. The three initial working groups met seven times each from September 2020 to December 2020. The first meeting of each working group was focused on setting up meeting expectations and the process for each working group. Each working group also assigned chairpersons and vice-chairpersons to present updates to the Committee. The second meeting of each working group focused on the groups' respective assigned topics.

Recommendations

The working groups used the Kansas Legislative Research Department's crosswalk of recommendations to review and assess past recommendations from:

- The Governor's Substance Use Disorder Task Force (2018 report);
- The Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council (2018 and 2019 reports);
- The Crossover Youth Working Group (2019 report);
- The Kansas Mental Health Task Force (2018 and 2019 reports); and
- The Child Welfare System Task Force (2017 preliminary and 2018 final reports).

Working groups used past recommendations and proposed new ones, prioritizing and scoring each based on ease of implementation and potential for high impact. The Committee's working groups' final recommendations were all reached by consensus and were organized by each working group's assigned topics.

Each working group divided recommendations into those that required "immediate action," which were those recommendations the working group believed could be completed in the next two years, and those that were of "strategic importance," which referred to recommendations that could be addressed over the long term. KHI produced and presented to the Committee the Strategic Framework for Modernizing the Kansas Behavioral Health System, which included a summary of the working groups' high-priority recommendations, recommendations that were not deemed high priority, the recommendation rubric, and the working groups' membership lists.

The final working group recommendations were categorized by ten topics:

- Workforce;
- Funding and accessibility;
- Community engagement;
- Prevention and education;
- Treatment and recovery;
- Special populations;
- Data systems;
- Interactions with the legal system and law enforcement;
- System transformation; and
- Telehealth.

At the December 10, 2020, Committee meeting, the Committee reviewed the Strategic Framework and recommended additional edits after discussion. At the December 11, 2020, Committee meeting, the edits were formalized, and the Strategic Framework was approved, as amended, by the Committee. The Committee requested the Strategic Framework, as amended by the Committee, be attached to the Committee's final report.

The Committee produced a final report and submitted it to the Legislature and relevant committees in January 2021. The report is available on the [KLRD website](#).