

July 2021

Kansas Lawmakers Aim to Transform State's Mental Health System

On June 11, CFO Sheri Knight and I traveled to Topeka to witness a ceremonial bill signing that established Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics and a Rural Emergency Hospital model in Kansas.

This new legislation will provide a sustainable way to fund high-quality, comprehensive services focusing on recovery, wellness and trauma-informed care



"This bill is being called the state's most important piece of mental health legislation in over 30 years, and, with the right effort, we believe it will be truly transformative."



that takes both physical and behavioral health into account. Moving forward, CCBHCs will be specifically designed to address critical problems including the suicide crisis, overdose deaths, inadequate care for veterans and barriers to timely treatment access – all of which impact the state's mental health system, at large.

In return, there will be an enhanced Medicaid reimbursement rate, making it easier to retain staff, promote patient outreach and provide more services within each of our communities. The sustainable payment model that the CCBHCs will utilize differs from the traditional system, which has been funded by time-limited grants and reimbursement rates that have failed to increase since 2006.

Altogether, it is a very exciting time to be able to expand our services. In the coming months, we will be busy laying a foundation in preparation to shift CrossWinds into a CCBHC model within the next two to three years. Currently, we are focusing on improving access by increasing delivery to the underserved populations in our communities and developing collaborative efforts with a variety of local agencies.



Amanda Cunningham

Summer Programs Heat Up

In March, W.S. & E.C. Jones Testamentary Trust, Bank of America, N.A., Trustees awarded CrossWinds a total of \$75,000 for the benefit of local children's programs. While the money was put to good use during the school year, it continues to make a positive impact this summer. In addition to providing new equipment and plenty more opportunities for activities and outings, the money has also served to streamline training for staff.

“Osage County clients have been busy learning about their emotions and how to positively express themselves. They get daily practice to build these interpersonal and social skills through peer activities like working collaboratively on STEM projects, tie dyeing shirts and making new friends. They are looking forward to future community outings to visit first responders, the bowling alley, the movie theatre, nature experiences and many more fun adventures. Providing these opportunities allow staff to teach positive community engagement, resource acquisition and an overall enrichment of childhood experiences.”

- Lauren Rickner, Region III Manager

“The Gateway program serving Lyon County has been going great so far. This summer, we have been able to serve all of Lyon as well as expand services – which has not been able to happen in a few years. We are having a blast doing various activities and looking forward to new things like going to the pool, playing mini golf, tie dyeing with the Emporia Arts Council, getting ice cream, and going to the park and Splash Pad. The Jones grant has given us the ability to participate in new things and provide new opportunities for our clients.”

- Jade Smith, Psychosocial Group Manager

Telehealth Services Continue to Increase Connectivity

Although telehealth platforms had seen prior use at CrossWinds, there was still doubt as to how effective such a delivery model could be when COVID-19 forced staff to shift most in-person services to an online format. More than a year later, however, the continued use and expansion of virtual delivery models has reaped benefits. With many clients now able to meet with therapists and case managers from the comfort of their homes, year-to-date services are up by 10% compared to last year. Thanks to you, access to treatment has also been increased by dedicated telehealth rooms. Outfitted with monitors and comfortable seating, the spaces have given clients without the means to connect to the internet an opportunity to continue treatment with their preferred providers despite distance or scheduling conflicts.



“Some clients have really committed to opening up more in this format. I had a client that went from using meth frequently to becoming sober and escaping an abusive relationship. They were able to start going to school and just recently graduated with a degree. The majority of the time I spent with them was done over video services, and we didn't miss a beat at all.”

Tim Aspleaf, Outpatient Therapist