

ESTABLISHING AN ADVISORY PANEL FOR A REGIONAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL IN SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS

On August 25, 2023, Governor Laura Kelly signed Executive Order 23-05¹ to establish an Advisory Panel for Planning, Design, and Construction of a Regional Psychiatric Hospital in South Central Kansas (specifically Sedgwick County). The Advisory Panel was tasked with gathering public input on the needs and location of a regional psychiatric hospital. A final report from the Advisory Panel, due to the Governor and the Sedgwick County Commission on June 30, 2024, will include recommendations on the workforce development needed to staff a regional psychiatric hospital, recommendations about the operating model for the hospital, and statutory changes needed to operate a new state hospital including changes in catchment areas, scope of practice, and cooperation with other service providers.



This interim report provides essential background information, summarizes the Advisory Panel’s work to date, and lays out the next steps for the panel’s work.

BACKGROUND

The State of Kansas operates state psychiatric hospitals in Osawatomie and Larned, under K.S.A. 39-1601, *et seq.* From January 1-October 31, 2023, Osawatomie admitted 148 patients, with 21.8% of those from Sedgwick County (14.2% at Osawatomie State Hospital and 7.6% at Adair Acute Care). Osawatomie serves adults with severe and persistent mental illness. At Larned, 14.0% of those admitted were from Sedgwick County for the State Security Program (court-referred males who cannot be managed in a less restrictive environment, defendants from jail on a hold order with a high-level crime, and/or are a threat of harm toward patients or staff)—in January 2022, 29 inmates in the Sedgwick County jail waited an average of 130 days for treatment at Larned with the most extended wait being 329 days.

2022 HB 2510 established the Special Committee on Mental Health Beds, which met for five days during the 2022 interim. In January 2023, the Special Committee for the Kansas Legislature delivered its final report² on Kansas's mental health bed crisis. The Special Committee was directed to:

- Review the need for inpatient psychiatric hospital beds and develop a long-term plan to address mental health needs;

¹ Executive Order 23-05 can be accessed [here](#).

² The full Final Report can be accessed [here](#).



- Review the regional bed expansion plan and how the beds would be constructed;
- Review best practices for providing the operation and oversight of the expanded beds;
- Review the long-term fiscal impact of the additional beds; and
- Study and develop a plan for providing a 50-bed facility with acute inpatient psychiatric beds and adult forensic beds in the Sedgwick County regional area.

The Special Committee recognized there is a current shortage of appropriate services for patients with mental illness, with stress placed on the staff and budgets of other community institutions, such as hospitals, jails, and community mental health systems. The Special Committee recommended:

- The State Finance Council should release the \$15 million appropriated to the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) for the purpose of opening a new state hospital. The funds should be utilized to develop a specific plan for the construction and operation of a new state hospital, including the issuance of a request for proposal.
- KDADS should work with Sedgwick County to open a facility in the Sedgwick County regional area with a capacity of up to 50 state institution beds. The facility should be located in an area with room for expansion to ensure additional beds can be added if needed. The project should begin within the calendar year 2023. In addition, KDADS and Sedgwick County should consider whether the facility should be publicly or privately operated.
- The State Finance Council should allocate \$40 million from federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to open the 50-bed facility, as requested by Sedgwick County through the Strengthening People and Revitalizing (SPARK) Kansas Task Force.
- The Legislature should appropriate up to \$5 million to KDADS for each fiscal year to begin a two-year pilot program to reimburse hospitals for the supervision and transfer of individuals waiting for a state hospital bed. KDADS should then provide the Legislature with an annual report on how the funds are being used.
- The Legislature, KDADS, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment should investigate available waiver and reimbursement options that can be used to pull down additional federal funds to reimburse providers of mental health services.
- The Legislature and KDADS should research how technology, such as apps, can be used to reach those facing mental health challenges and investigate current practices being used to reach individuals in crisis via technology.

- The Committee met with the Board of Nursing, Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board, State Board of Regents, universities, community and technical colleges, state agencies, private colleges, and other stakeholders to discuss the following topics:
 - Increasing the accessibility and transferability of certifications, such as the Licensed Mental Health Technician, Mental Health Developmental Disability Technician, and other mental health certificates applicable to workers in the state hospital settings;
 - Creating outreach and incentive programs to expand the mental health workforce pipeline, such as the creation of scholarships and public-private partnerships;
 - Reducing barriers that prevent workers from rejoining the workforce once they have retired;
 - Developing a method to track the use of programs designed to promote the mental health workforce and continually evaluate their effectiveness and
 - Addressing wage disparities among mental health providers and other similar jobs.



ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- Chairperson Scott Brunner, Deputy Secretary of Hospitals and Facilities, KDADS
- Vice-Chairperson Sarah Lopez, Sedgwick County Commissioner, District 2
- Marc Bennett, District Attorney, Sedgwick County
- Representative Will Carpenter, District 75
- Jeff Easter, Sheriff, Sedgwick County
- Claudio Ferraro, President, Ascension Via Christi St. Joseph
- Jason Gregory, Executive Vice President, Downtown Wichita
- Representative Henry Helgerson, District 83
- Mary Jones, President/CEO, Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas
- Representative KC Ohaebosim, District 89
- Senator Usha Reddi, District 22
- LaTasha St. Arnault, President and CEO, Humankind Ministries
- Tom Stolz, County Manager, Sedgwick County
- Joan Tammany, Director, COMCARE

PROCESS AND WORK TO DATE

KDADS entered into an agreement in March 2023 with Sedgwick County to provide funding for planning, designing, and other services for constructing a regional psychiatric hospital in South Central Kansas.

In May 2023, Governor Kelly announced that KDADS awarded \$25 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to Sedgwick County to create a new regional hospital to address statewide health and behavioral health services shortages. In addition, the State Finance Council earmarked \$15 million from the State General Fund in December 2022 for the planning and initial design work.

On August 28, 2023, Governor Kelly announced the South Central Regional Psychiatric Hospital Advisory Panel membership. This 14-member panel gathers public input and recommends the operation, location, and workforce development needs of the proposed 50-bed psychiatric hospital in South Central Kansas.

KDADS issued a Statement of Work for Facilitating and Support for Regional State Hospital Advisory Council on August 21, 2023, through the Statewide Master Consulting Services Contracts award process. Responses to the statement of work were due September 20, 2023. A task order selection committee reviewed the submitted responses and selected the Learning Tree Institute at Greenbush (LTI) on October 4, 2023, to facilitate and support the Advisory Panel. The subsequent task order was executed between KDADS and LTI on October 6, 2023.

MEETING ONE – October 9, 2023

The Sedgwick County Commission Chair, Pete Meitzner, and Secretary of KDADS, Laura Howard, welcomed the Advisory Panel members to the meeting. Secretary Howard named Scott Brunner as her representative and Chair of the Panel. Commissioner Meitzner announced Commissioner Sarah Lopez as Vice Chair of the Panel.

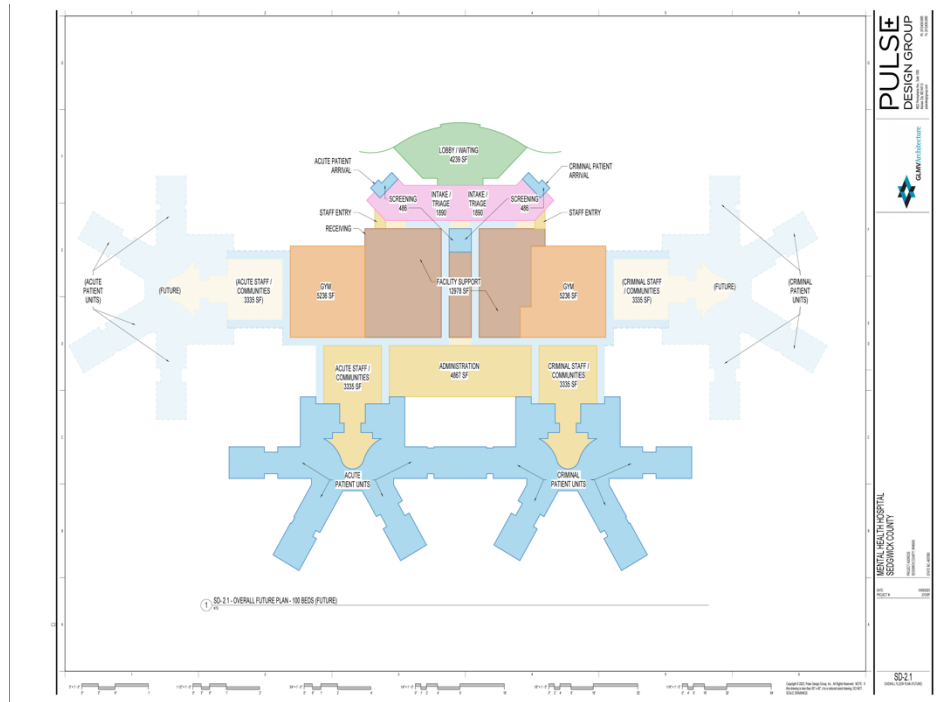
A review of the Executive Order 23-05 was conducted. Chair Brunner indicated an interim report would be provided to the Sedgwick County Commission and the Governor by January 14, 2024, with a final report by June 30, 2024.

The Advisory Panel is charged with four key tasks.

- 1) Gathering public input on the needs and location of a regional psychiatric hospital;
- 2) Making recommendations on workforce development needed to staff a regional psychiatric hospital;
- 3) Making recommendations on the operating model for the hospital and
- 4) Recommending statutory changes if needed.

Due to the high visibility and significance of the Advisory Panel, the KDADS Chief Council and the Sedgwick County Counselor provided an overview of the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA). All meetings of the Advisory Panel are subject to KOMA.

A schematic design of the hospital floor plan and project timeline was provided to the Advisory Panel. Preliminary designs and a construction team comprised of staff from KDADS, Sedgwick County, and architects from GMLV and Pulse Design Group collaborated on the proposed floor plan. The agenda and video for this meeting can be found [here](#).





MEETING TWO – November 6, 2023

Chair Brunner introduced the facilitation team from the Learning Tree Institute at Greenbush (LTI) to the members of the Advisory Panel. The LTI team and KDADS members developed a one-page summary for the project, a timeline for public input opportunities, and an online survey. Representatives from LTI, Monica Murnan and Dr. Lisa Pelkey, presented the timeline and survey information.

Dr. Lindsey Dinkel, Superintendent of Larned State Hospital, and Ashley Byram, Superintendent of Osawatomie State Hospital, presented the current state of their respective psychiatric hospitals. Both expressed severe staffing shortages and individuals requiring private rooms (versus two persons to a room). The average length of stay for Larned is 11 days at acute treatment and 90 days for competency evaluation. At Osawatomie, the average stay is 7-11 days and 90-180 days for competency evaluation. Other significant trends are the increase of younger individuals with mental health crises, consistent medication compliance, and the lack of transition programs such as group homes and nursing facilities.

A presentation was provided by Tim Kaufman, Deputy County Manager, on the Behavioral Health Landscape in Sedgwick County. Services come primarily from COMCARE. COMCARE provides Community-Based, Crisis, Substance Abuse, and School-Based Behavioral Health Services. COMCARE is currently transitioning to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic. Other community providers include Ascension Via Christi, Physical Health Safety Net clinics, the Substance Abuse Center of Kansas, private practice and primary care providers, and housing and homeless service providers who also provide mental health services for individuals in Sedgwick County.

There was a discussion about holding a town hall meeting to garner additional community input. The agenda and video for this meeting can be found [here](#).



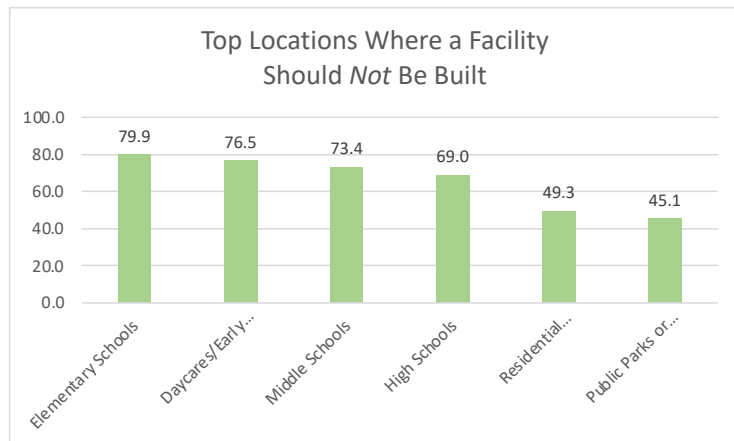
MEETING THREE – November 17, 2023

The Advisory Panel met for a special meeting to solidify plans for a proposed town hall meeting. A town hall open forum will be held on December 12, 2023, from 5:00-7:00 PM at the Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex at Wichita State University. A sub-panel of volunteers will work with LTI to determine the town hall meeting agenda and format. Data collected from community members during the town hall meeting will be shared with the Board of Sedgwick County Commission for its meeting on December 20, 2023.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS – November 3-30, 2023

KDADS and LTI staff developed a two-page document to solicit community input for the project. This document summarized the purpose behind constructing a psychiatric hospital with a preliminary rendition of the facility’s layout. A timeline was also provided for the project (see the previous page of this report).

KDADS and LTI collaborated on an English and Spanish survey of nine questions. The survey was written at an appropriate reading level (general public), low vision was enabled, and multiple modes of access were available: Computer, tablet, mobile device, phone/verbal, and paper/mail (upon request). Personally identifiable information was only collected if the individual volunteered for a future project, such as a focus group. Utilizing a purchased distribution email list, the survey was administered between November 1 and November 30 to a random sample of individuals residing in Sedgwick County. A total of 882 responses to the survey were returned and validated. Findings indicate more females (81.8%) than males (17.9%) completed the survey. Nine percent (9.2%) self-identified as Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin. Most respondents self-identified as White (95.2%). Full findings are available here.



A postcard was developed in conjunction with the survey, which provided a QR code and link to the survey. The postcard was distributed to a random sample of addresses within Sedgwick County utilizing a random address selector (https://zip.postcodebase.com/random_address_generator). Zip codes were selected based on their location outside of Wichita proper and targeted low broadband areas, business owners, community members, and individuals who may not have an Internet subscription as identified by the Department of Commerce. A heat map of zip distribution is included as Appendix A. Postcards were mailed on November 6, 2023. Through a partnership with the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition, postcards were distributed at a November 16, 2023, meeting.

A two-minute video was prepared for distribution on websites and through social media. A link to the video can be found [here](#) under Project Information.

A request for proposal (RFP) for submitting either an existing building or land which met the established criteria was issued on October 25, 2023 by Sedgwick County. The deadline for submission was November 30, 2023. A total of **XX** potential sites were received. A review panel has been convened to vet the existing buildings and/or potential site locations. As a part of the bid process the review panel will work with an on-call realtor to look at properties and existing buildings.

A request for proposal for architectural and engineering services was issued on November 6, 2023. The deadline for submission was November 21, 2023. A total of **XX** bids were received. A review panel has been convened to select an architectural firm.

NEXT STEPS

Upon approval of this Interim Report by the Advisory Panel, the report will be distributed to the Office of the Governor and Sedgwick County by the deadline of January 15, 2024, as established in Executive Order 23-05.

A town hall meeting will be held on December 12, 2023, to provide additional public input on the proposed sites solicited through the bid process.

After an architectural firm has been selected, the architectural firm and the Advisory Panel will research state psychiatric hospitals in other states to garner ideas on the facility's layout and overall design for possible adoption for the proposed facility.

Individuals who indicated on the survey their willingness to be contacted for future sessions may be invited to participate in focus groups in January and February 2024.

The Advisory Panel will continue to meet monthly, while the KDADS and LTI team will continue facilitating the process through weekly meetings.

The Advisory Panel will receive a draft of the final report in May 2024 to review and approve to meet the June 30, 2024, deadline, as established in Executive Order 23-05. Upon delivery of the final report and any additional sample legislation, Governor Kelly will determine how her administration will proceed and utilize the Advisory Panel's recommendations for the building, staffing, and administration of the South Central Regional Psychiatric Hospital in Sedgwick County.

December 1, 2023

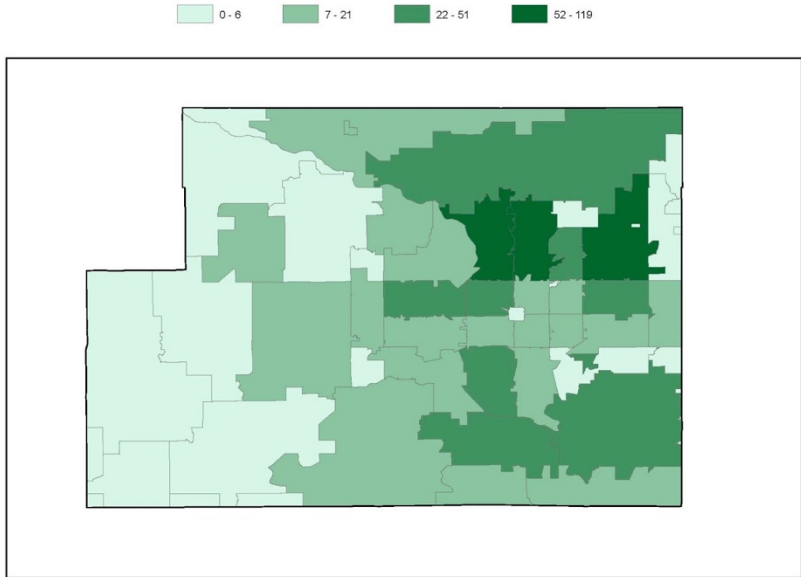
**INTERIM REPORT OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL
PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL ADVISORY PANEL**



RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX A – ZIP CODE HEAT MAPS

This graphic displays the survey respondents (n=882) of Sedgwick County according to zip code. The survey does appear to visually represent the population density areas accurately.



This graphic displays the estimated population density of Sedgwick County according to zip code using the 2020 decennial census.

