

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Governor Brownback Announces Major Improvements
To Delivery Of Behavioral Health Services In Kansas City Metro Area**

KANSAS CITY – Kansas Governor Sam Brownback announced today that the state has entered into an agreement with Wyandot Center to transition the Rainbow Mental Health Facility into a crisis stabilization resource to serve persons with mental illness or substance use disorders in the Kansas City metro area. Wyandot Center will partner with the Johnson County Mental Health Center and Heartland Regional Alcohol and Drug Assessment Center (Heartland RADAC) for this initiative.

“This is the most significant change we have made to the Kansas mental health system in two decades,” Governor Brownback said. “Our goal is to establish and support alternative community programs that will decrease reliance on Osawatimie State Hospital (OSH) and the unnecessary use of local emergency rooms, community hospitals and jails.”

“We believe the combined expertise of the two community mental health centers and Heartland RADAC will repurpose Rainbow for services that are responsive to community needs with the potential of becoming a template for the rest of Kansas,” Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services Secretary Shawn Sullivan said. “I would like to thank Senator Denning and Rep. Wolfe-Moore, and the behavioral health and law enforcement communities for their support and involvement in the design process of this project.”

“The new Rainbow Mental Health Model is a long-term solution for Wyandotte and Johnson County. Rep. Moore and I worked together across party lines to ensure these needed services would be offered and the funding would be in place. Sheriff Frank Denning has often said public safety officers and the patients need a 'Port in the Storm.' The new Rainbow model with emphasis on crisis stabilization services will provide this safe port for both the mental health patients and public safety officers,” said Senator Jim Denning, R-Overland Park.

Peter W. Zevenbergen, Jr., president and CEO of Wyandot, Inc., said that the new Rainbow entity will support collaborative efforts with law enforcement agencies in both counties to reduce the number of persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorders who are incarcerated for low-level crimes.

“We want to get people in our jails who are suffering from mental illness into an appropriate treatment setting, and we want to get our law enforcement officers back on the street,” Zevenbergen said.

Wyandot Center, Johnson County Mental Health Center and Heartland RADAC will continue to operate crisis stabilization services at existing locations in their respective communities. The residential treatment beds that were moved from the Rainbow Mental Health Facility to OSH in the fall of 2011 will remain at OSH, and the state will not resume provision of mental health services at Rainbow.

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