



2518 Ridge Ct.
Room 238
Lawrence, KS 66046
785-749-0121
Fax: 785-843-3728
www.thearcckks.org

A chapter of The Arc of the United States

Bob Bethel Oversight committee:

My name is Angie Reinking and I am the Executive Director for the Arc of Douglas County. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. The Arc of Douglas County is an advocacy organization started by families in 1956. Our agency provides targeted case management, referred to as TCM, to individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) in 4 Kansas counties. I am here today to talk about opportunities to improve our service system for our fellow Kansans with I/DD.

First, I would like to thank you for the recent rate increase for I/DD TCM which went into effect on 7.1.23. This rate increase has made it somewhat less difficult to balance our books. However, the rate of \$ 75/hr. still does not cover the cost of providing the service. Many HCBS service providers report that they subsidize their case management services with other funds, due to the inadequate rate. For people on the 10+ year waiting list for HCBS services, the TCM service is the ONLY service they qualify for, and the TCM service is a critical resource for helping families navigate life while waiting for needed services. For those on the I/DD waiver, their case management is a vital service, helping them navigate the service system, address concerns, and to support their individual goals.

We take pride in the fact that we are an **independent** case management agency. This means that we do NOT provide any of the HCBS services that people receive on the I/DD waiver. We purposefully maintain this status so our case managers are able to advocate with service providers without any conflict of interest, perceived or real. Small, independent providers are struggling to pay the bills. More importantly, the inadequate rate limits our ability to expand to serve more people. We want to be part of the solution to building capacity within our I/DD TCM system, but we cannot help without adequate revenue.

I want to highlight the importance of the KDADS led workgroup on I/DD Conflict of Interest. I was selected to be on this workgroup, which had their 1st meeting recently, and will continue to be a voice for Independent case management services. Our goals include designing a grant program that will help address the conflict of interest issue along with the capacity challenges with this service. Despite our struggles, our agency is an example that it is possible to provide TCM services independently, which critical to maintaining the integrity of our I/DD service system.

Finally, I want to highlight the importance of providing benefits and a living wage to the fabulous case managers across the state, both because they deserve it and to reduce turnover/retain quality staff. As a 66 year old agency, we are committed to providing benefits, including life & health insurance. Many TCM providers offer no benefits to their staff, and hire them as contractors because the costs to add benefits such as health insurance, is prohibitive. Our BOD does not want to reduce benefits, but without a rate increase for TCM, we may have no other choice. I feel it is vital that agencies are reimbursed at a rate that allows us to not just keep the doors open, but to be a quality employer who is offering basic benefits that all employees deserve.

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