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**Kansas COVID-19 Response Initiative Receives Additional \$2.8 Million in Extended SAMHSA
Emergency COVID-19 Funding**

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services' (KDADS) Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Commission has received an additional \$2.8 million in federal funding for its Kansas COVID-19 Response initiative launched in August last year. Kansas initially received \$2 million in short-term [Emergency COVID-19 Grant](#) funds from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The additional funds announced today allow the agency to continue to respond to mental health and substance use disorder impacts during COVID-19 through May 2022.

The Kansas COVID-19 Response initiative is intended to create or enhance the state's crisis response infrastructure in partnership with Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas (ACMHCK), and a group of peer support and peer recovery organizations.

In recognition of the struggles facing the healthcare community during the pandemic, 10 percent of the funds initially received last year and 10 percent of the additional funds received have been dedicated to providing mental health and substance use support to healthcare workers, from front-line providers to support staff for healthcare facilities. Healthcare workers impacted by COVID-19 are encouraged to reach out to a CMHC for assistance through the program. CMHCs participating in the grant program continue to develop and provide new outreach and support systems for healthcare workers.

"Our goal for the additional funds is to continue to provide direct mental health and substance use services that reach those who need them most right now," BHS Commissioner Andy Brown said. "This will allow us, on a longer-term basis, to build on the successful work we've been doing to address the needs of an increased number of Kansans struggling with varied mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic."

The initiative will continue to meet the needs of more than 10,000 adults and children with serious mental illness, people who may have co-occurring substance use disorder, and people with less severe mental health issues, including healthcare practitioners, resulting from the current COVID-19 crisis.

The creation of a crisis response infrastructure to include expansion of telehealth, expanded crisis response services and enhanced recovery support services has already helped many, including those in what are considered 11 hot-spot counties in Kansas: Butler, Douglas, Finney, Ford, Johnson, Leavenworth, Reno, Sedgwick, Seward, Shawnee, and Wyandotte. Funding for housing, technology improvements, and outreach are also included.

Funds will be utilized as a financial last resort to support services to individuals who are:

- Not covered by public or commercial health insurance programs
- Not able to afford insurance coverage
- Not covered sufficiently by their health insurance plan

All individuals served through the Kansas COVID-19 Response initiative will also meet with a Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/*Social Security Disability* Insurance Program (SSDI) Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Benefits Specialist to discover eligibility for other resources and services available.

The Kansas COVID-19 Response Initiative will continue to be managed through KDADS' Kansas COVID-19 Response Project Director (Shaun Dierker) who is responsible for guidance of the response, management of the project, collaboration with CMHCs and other partners, and reporting to SAMHSA.

For full details about the initiative visit <https://kdads.ks.gov/covid-19> or for questions, contact Project Coordinator [Shaun Dierker](#).

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