

KS behavioral health gets \$72.5 M boost

By ANNA KAMINSKI
Kansas Reflector

TOPEKA — Two years ago, Kansas ranked dead last in a national assessment of mental illness and access to behavioral health care.

In 2025, that ranking rose to 18th in the nation, and state officials say the shift is a direct outcome of investment in quality care.

A \$72.5 MILLION grant recently awarded to Kansas and two other states is expected to push the state's progress further by bolstering access to quality behavioral health care.

"This initiative represents a pivotal opportunity for Kansas to lead in behavioral health innovation," said Laura Howard, secretary of the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), in a Nov. 18 news release.

Kansas, Illinois and Michigan will share the \$72 million over the next three years. The Washington, D.C.-based National Council for Mental Wellbeing will administer the funds, which come from the Ballmer Group, a philanthropic organization founded by former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and his wife, Connie.

THE NATIONAL council will use the grant to help states establish or expand Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics, which offer 24/7 crisis care, counseling, case management, outpatient services, psychiatric rehabilitation, treatment planning and mental health care for veterans.

The grant will focus on building a range of services, including crisis care, outpatient mental health and substance use services, primary care screening and monitoring, community-based mental health care for veterans, and partnerships with community organizations such as law enforcement, schools and homeless shelters.

Connie Ballmer said in a national council news release that community behavioral health clinics have been successful in addressing community behavioral health needs, especially those



The Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center in Iola is one of Kansas' 26 federally certified community behavioral health clinics that increase access to mental health care across the state. PHOTO BY MAX MCCOY/KANSAS REFLECTOR

of kids and families.

"Access to comprehensive, high-quality care provides people with the opportunity to achieve stability," Ballmer said.

A 2024 STUDY of Kansas clinics found that establishing community behavioral health

significant changes to mental health care in Kansas in decades.

COMMUNITY behavioral health clinics first opened in 2017 when a federal project established 66 clinics in eight states. More than 500 clinics now exist in 46 states, Washington,

with any mental illness and adults with serious thoughts of suicide as major factors for the state's low ranking.

The state's future efforts will focus on behavioral health workforce shortages, rural access to care, financial longevity, quality services and expanded partnerships to better coordinate wraparound care.

The state knows that federal policy changes are coming, but the precise financial and operational impact on Kansas CCBHCs remains undetermined.

— Cara Sloan-Ramos, KDADS spokesperson

clinics, which expanded upon existing services, increased annual visits from about 24,000 to about 42,000. The state's annual costs also increased, rising from \$52 million to \$74 million, according to data from the state aging and disabilities department.

However, the study hypothesized clinics may result in \$5 million in costs avoided from would-be emergency room visits and \$42 million in costs avoided from inpatient stays.

Kansas has 26 clinics. The state Legislature passed a bill in 2021 to certify and fund those clinics, a move regarded as one of the most

D.C., and Puerto Rico. They are largely funded by Medicaid.

Cara Sloan-Ramos, a spokesperson for KDADS, said it's unclear how recent federal Medicaid changes could impact the state's community behavioral health clinics.

"The state knows that federal policy changes are coming," Sloan-Ramos said, "but the precise financial and operational impact on Kansas CCBHCs remains undetermined."

The 2023 assessment that ranked Kansas last among all 50 states and Washington, D.C., cited youths with substance use disorders, adults

Drunk raccoon goes on liquor store rampage

NY Daily News/TNS

A "very intoxicated raccoon" was found passed out in the bathroom of a liquor store in Ashland, Va., over the weekend after breaking in and ransacking several shelves, officials said Tuesday.

The "Black Friday break-in" was discovered early Saturday morning by an employee at the Ashland ABC store.

The employee called the local animal control office to report that she had found the break-in "suspect" passed out on the bathroom floor.

Animal control officer Samantha Martin responded to the scene and "safely secured our masked bandit and transported him back to the shelter to sober up before questioning," the Hanover County Animal Protection and Shelter said in a Face-



A Virginia store was trashed by a drunken raccoon. HANOVER COUNTY ANIMAL PROTECTION AND SHELTER/TNS

book post.

After a few hours of sleep and no signs of injury — "other than maybe a hangover and poor life choices" — the raccoon was released safely back into the wild, hopefully after having learned that "breaking and entering is not the answer," the agency said.

Officer Martin was commended for her professionalism and good humor in handling the "chaotic scene."

Public notice

(Published in The Iola Register December 4th, 2025)

ORDINANCE NO. 2503

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF LA HARPE, KANSAS:

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF LA HARPE, KANSAS:

Section 1. That the zoning designation for the below described real property be changed from **(R-1) Residential to (C-1) Commercial:**

Lots 1, 2, & 3, Block 10
Original Plat
City of La Harpe, Allen County, Kansas
(a/k/a 902 South Main)

Section 2. That notice of the Application for Zoning Change was given as required by law and a public hearing on the Application was held by the La Harpe City Council on November 12, 2025; it is the recommendation of the La Harpe Code Enforcement Officer that the zoning change request be granted.

Section 3. That the Zoning District Map be amended to reflect the change in zoning designation of the above-described real property and that upon such change being made, the same be and is hereby reincorporated as amended.

Section 4. That this Ordinance shall become effective upon its publication in the official City newspaper.

Passed by the City Council this 1st day of December, 2025.

Approved by the Mayor this 1st day of December, 2025.



ATTEST:

Michelle Altis, City Clerk

Frederick J Works
LA HARPE CITY ATTORNEY
4 East Jackson
Iola, KS 66749
(620) 433-5533

Ella Mae Crowell, Mayor

(12) 04

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High a year ago	83	Total year to date	44.67
Low a year ago	56	Excess since Jan. 1	7.1

Sunrise 7:22 a.m.

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