

2020 Legislative Priorities

Priority #1: KPA advocates for evidence-based practices for youth that promote psychological well-being, physical health, and safety

Banning Conversion Therapy: HB 199 & SB 85

- KPA supports a ban on conversion therapy to “treat” sexual orientation or gender identity for persons under the age of 18. There is clear evidence that conversion therapy does not work, and further evidence that it is harmful to LGBTQ individuals.

Support of Qualified Mental Health Professionals in Schools: SB 8

- We support the addition of school-based mental health service providers in the required ratio of 1:250 students, to provide mental health services and to create trauma-informed schools that address students’ needs and prevent violence. Qualified mental health professionals in schools can now bill Medicaid, providing a mechanism for funding the addition of these professionals.
- We support training school resource officers in trauma-informed and evidence-based practices to help decrease disruptive behavior in schools. We have a strong evidence base that developing relationships and having positive interactions with students can both minimize disruptive behavior and increase the chances that students report concerns about themselves or other students. Requiring SROs to carry firearms can negatively impact this relationship, with particular harm for students with marginalized backgrounds.

Banning Corporal Punishment in Schools: HB 22

- KPA supports a ban on corporal punishment in schools. Corporal punishment is tied to many negative outcomes and does not promote positive behaviors or a positive learning environment.

Priority #2: KPA advocates for the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact, HB 110

Support for the Formation of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT): HB 110

- KPA supports the formation of the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT) which will allow psychologists to practice telehealth in Kentucky and in other states who are part of the compact. This will increase the accessibility to psychological services in our state, especially in rural areas

Priority #3: Budget Issue: KPA supports critical health and welfare agencies that provide the safety net of community services in Kentucky and opposes fiscal barriers to their survival

Pension Help for Quasi-Governmental Agencies

- KPA recognizes that Community Mental Health Centers are essential to providing mental health services to the Commonwealth, as well as Public Health Departments, Rape Crisis Centers, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Children’s Advocacy Centers. The CMHCs are the “go to” place for law enforcement, schools, and walk-ins. These programs prevent and diffuse many emergencies in our communities. Such agencies are unlikely to survive unless the funds they contribute to pensions are stabilized at the current rate of 49%. If forced to pay the employer contribution of 93% next fiscal year, many will go bankrupt.

Priority #4: KPA advocates for more evidence-based mental health programming and for the inclusion of psychologists in making decisions that affect mental health care in the Commonwealth

Support for Mental Health First Aid Training: HB 153

- KPA supports the establishment of the Kentucky Mental Health First Aid Training Program or similar educational programs to be administered by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services with the goals of educating the public and preventing suicides.

Support for the Kentucky Eating Disorder Council: SB 82

- KPA supports the establishment of the Kentucky Eating Disorder Council in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to provide a forum for research, education and treatment of eating disorders across Kentucky.

Support for the Severe Mental Illness Task Force: HCR 49

- KPA supports the formation of the Severe Mental Illness Task Force to study the provision of mental health services to adults with a severe mental illness and make recommendations for legislation and regulations to improve services and supports.

Opposition to the Medical Ethics Bill that Would Decrease Access to Healthcare: SB 90

- KPA opposes this bill and did not ask for “psychologists” to be included in this statute. This bill allows healthcare providers, institutions, and payers to refuse to provide healthcare services to Kentuckians on the basis of their “conscience,” which is too loosely defined. Decreasing access of care to individuals is against our ethics, and we were not consulted regarding our inclusion in this bill.

Priority #5: KPA supports legislation to protect individuals with severe mental illness from the death penalty, HB 237

Support for Exempting Kentuckians with Severe Mental Illness from the Death Penalty: HB 237

- KPA supports legislation that, going forward, individuals with severe mental illness would not be subject to the death penalty.