

HB 1012
House Appropriations
Human Resources Division
Representative Jon Nelson, Chairman
January 25, 2021

Representative Nelson and other members of the Committee, I am Denise Harvey, Director of Program Services with the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A). P&A is an independent state agency that protects people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and advocates for the civil and legal rights of people with disabilities.

P&A supports the 1915(i) state plan amendment, and the tremendous efforts made to put this into place. P&A appreciates the extensive work done by DHS to expand behavioral health services to meet the needs of people with the right service, at the right time, nearest their home.

P&A supports the building of a new State Hospital with reduced beds, in conjunction with the establishment of 6 to 10 beds in the western part of the state. As per the 2020 update to the HSRI report, "There is little evidence to support investment in high-cost residential treatment when resources could be allocated elsewhere." Our office has worked collaboratively with the State Hospital regarding discharge planning for individuals with longer stays. It is anticipated that with the current availability of Residential Habilitation Services, and the availability of additional Home and Community-Based Services through the 1915(i), that more individuals will be able to successfully reside in integrated community settings. It is expected that as the state of ND works toward having a full continuum of services in place for those with behavioral

health needs that there will be more beds available to appropriately meet the needs of individuals requiring acute care, for and not longer than, the length of stay needed for treatment. It is hoped that this will alleviate the pressure on law enforcement officials and other entities from varying parts of the state who are faced with emergent placement needs.

P&A supports peer support, along with certification and professional supervision for this program. We look forward to hearing of the positive results from consumers using this program. This has been a top priority for the consumers of mental health services for years, and we are very grateful for the support provided for this program and encourage on-going full financial support for this program.

P&A supports full funding for advocacy groups to include the Federation of Families and Family Voices. It is our understanding that these programs are marked for significant cuts for the next biennium. The support provided for families through these programs is invaluable. Families that use these programs often face ongoing challenges and need navigation through systems and support to meet the most critical needs of their families. Reductions in funding for these programs would be very detrimental to families with the highest level of needs.

P&A supports full funding for the North Dakota Brain Injury Network. The proposed significant cut in this program, which already has a limited staff of 3 persons, would drastically reduce services provided across the state of North Dakota. Services provided through the North Dakota Brain Injury Network that involve outreach, education and collaboration are not individual specific services and would not be reimbursable through the 1915(i). While the efforts to increase services for individuals

with brain injury through the 1915(i) are greatly appreciated, there remains much work to be done beyond this. The knowledge base and services provided by the North Dakota Brain Injury Network are essential for individuals with Brain Injuries and family members throughout our state.

In addition, P&A supports full funding for the facilitation of the ND Brain Injury Advisory Council by the Consensus Council. The work of the Advisory Council is vast and complex. The particularly skilled facilitation provided for meetings with members across the state, along with sub-committees, has been important in assisting the Council to meet targeted goals to best serve individuals with Brain Injuries and family members.

I am glad to answer any questions.

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