

Chairman Nelson and Members of the House Appropriations – Human Resources Committee, for the record my name is Dave Marion and have the great fortune of working for the Summit Prairie Recovery Center, located in rural Raleigh, ND. Summit Prairie Recovery Center is a one of kind, committed residential agency working with individuals seeking addiction and mental health services. It provides a short term, quiet, rural environment for recovery with committed staff and therapist experienced in substance use and mental health concerns.

We're in support of:

The re-instatement and full funding of the ND Substance Use Disorder Voucher Program to include acceptance of new providers and participants. The SUD Voucher Program has served as a safety net for those without health insurance or adequate resources to access addiction treatment in ND, however funding ended in July for people seeking to enroll in the program. We receive around 10-15 calls a day from clients with Medicaid and Sanford expansion looking for intensive outpatient services and residential beds. Many of these individuals are referred to us by the physicians in the Emergency Rooms. Most of these individuals have experienced overdose and their lives are at extreme risk and are referred to us from other professionals that find lack of services for those most extreme needs. One example of many we see is an individual that lived 60 miles from the nearest treatment professionals, no internet access due to rural location and lack of knowledge of technology and the inability to get himself sober enough to begin the learning process. How much more hostile can it get... his life was baron, no transportation or ability to obtain services, but denied by his insurance. He was alone and wanted help, unfortunately this happens so often for so many in ND. These are individuals that could be helped by the SUD Voucher system. The ND SUD Voucher is one the most important tools in serving the increasing need for North Dakotans who have a Substance use disorder. The voucher provides not only the ability of patients to obtain critical services in a timely manner, but it provides provider choice so patients can stay close to home and families. In addition, the voucher serves as a tool to keep patients out of emergency rooms, hospital beds, jails and courts.

With the ongoing pandemic that compounded, high alcoholism rates, Opioid Crisis and Meth resurgence we respectfully ask your support of the \$17-million-dollar request for the voucher. Though some may see a significant budget increase, those of us who serve patients that want better and committed to changing their path know that this will save lives!!

Respectfully,
Dave Marion