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Heartview Foundation

"The provider of choice for quality treatment and education of substance use disorders."



Nationally Accredited

January 25, 2021

House Appropriations Human Resources Division

Chairman Nelson and members of the House Appropriations Human Services Division

My name is Kurt Snyder and I am the Executive Director of the Heartview Foundation. Heartview is a drug and alcohol treatment program established in 1964. We have over one hundred employees with an Opioid Treatment Program, outpatient programming and a 16-bed residential program in both Bismarck and Cando, ND. Last year we served individuals from 38 of the 53 counties of ND.

I am here today to voice our support for House Bill 1012 and specifically, the full funding of the SUD Voucher.

Since the inception of the SUD Voucher, it has been invaluable to providing access and care to so many citizens of North Dakota. And today, the need for substance use services is greater than ever as the opioid epidemic and COVID-19 devastate our communities.

Up until October of 2020, ND Medicaid did not cover the medication in the Opioid Treatment Programs and the SUD Voucher has been the only source of funding to cover these costs. We are grateful. However, the need for the SUD Voucher to support OTPs continues to be necessary. If an individual is Medicaid or Medicaid Expansion eligible, they still need to move through the approval process. In Burleigh County, we are experiencing a 3 to 4 month process for approval. Our patients rely on the SUD Voucher to have access to these lifesaving services in the interim.

I understand that the SUD Voucher is for filling gaps in coverage and is the payer of last resort. When other payment coverage is secured, Heartview has made repayments to the SUD Voucher Program. Please consider that Heartview's patient population, is over 65% Medicaid and/or Medicaid Expansion. (20% Medicaid and 47% ME). Much of our use of the SUD Voucher are for Medicaid or ME eligible individuals. If the approval process was addressed, our reliance on the SUD Voucher would be greatly reduced.

One solution for this issue is for ND Medicaid to identify Heartview Foundation and other Opioid Treatment Programs as "qualified Entities" to do Presumptive Eligibility. Presumptive eligibility is a Medicaid policy option that permits states to authorize specific types of "qualified entities," to screen eligibility based on gross income and temporarily enroll eligible individuals in Medicaid. Presumptive eligibility serves a dual purpose of providing immediate access to needed health care services while putting people on a path to ongoing coverage.

This concludes my testimony, and I would be open to answer any questions of the committee.

Kurt Snyder, Executive Director

Office: 701-751-5708 Cell: 701-426-8677

Email: kurt@heartview.org

• 701-222-0386 • info@heartview.org • heartview.org • Fax 701-255-4891 •

Administration
123 E. Broadway Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58501

Bismarck Downtown Campus
101 East Broadway Ave
Bismarck, ND 58501

Bismarck 23rd St. Recovery Center
305 N. 23rd St.
Bismarck, ND 58501

Cando
701-986-4056
7448 68th Ave. SE
Cando, ND 58324