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Date: January 24, 2023

Presentation to: Senator Dick Dever, Chair and Members of the Senate Appropriations - Human Resources Committee

Presenter: Debra Johnson, CEO of Prairie Harvest Mental Health, Grand Forks, ND
In support of SB2012

Prairie Harvest Mental Health has been providing permanent supportive housing and recovery-based mental health programs for adults with mental health concerns since 1992.

Prior to the last Legislative Session, Prairie Harvest Mental Health worked with Northeast Human Service Center in a public/private partnership funded by State Contracts totaling \$2.7 million per biennium. Today we are asking you to consider an additional appropriation of \$400,000 for Prairie Harvest Mental Health for funding gaps in community-based recovery services that are only partially funded by Medicaid.

During the 21/23 biennium, State Contracts with the Behavioral Health Division total just over \$1 million. The remaining \$1.7 million was expected to be funded primarily by Medicaid reimbursements, grants, and private donations. The result was a complete transformation of the entire agency. Every aspect of Prairie Harvest Mental Health was analyzed resulting in refocusing efforts to align our housing and services with the ND Behavioral Health Division's re-design. After realigning programs, the remaining net loss for fiscal year 2022 alone was \$587,000.

Grand Forks and the surrounding areas much like the rest of the country has experienced a rise in increased behavioral health concerns including mental health due to the pandemic and other economic and political challenges. Homelessness, suicides, and trauma such as domestic violence all add to the need to focus social service programs on areas that will improve the mental health system in North Dakota. According to the April 28, 2021 Renee Schulte Report, a SAMHSA study in 2018/2020 indicated that North Dakota had a general satisfaction rating of mental health consumers of 53.3%. The ND Behavioral Health Division and the State Legislature, narrowed their scope of mental health services to include citizens who are identified with acute behavioral health conditions. The result is that consumers who are in the moderate level continue to need housing and services so they can recover and maintain their mental health well-being.

Professionals from Northeast Human Service Center have indicated there are estimated to be over 3,000 people with mental health concerns who are not receiving the housing and supportive services they need. During the Prairie Harvest Mental Health development stage several challenges arose that have affected projected revenues.

Workforce challenges include:

- Turnover
- Shortage of qualified licensed professionals
- Training requirements (Medicaid, 1915(i))

- Lack of referrals from NE Human Service Center (expected over 200 with only a few received to date)

Prairie Harvest Mental Health is focusing on the development and expansion of Care Coordination, Peer Support, Housing Support, Non-medical Transportation and Benefits funded by the new ND Medicaid 1915(i) Amendment. Other services added include Rehabilitative Services such as Behavioral Intervention Services; Crisis Intervention; Skills Restoration and Skills Integration; maintaining a permanent supportive housing component; Life Skills/Job Development, Medication Education and Guidance all which will ensure a variety of choices available to help the participants succeed in their recovery.

Future plans are to add other behavioral health services such as substance use counseling and expansion to serve infants through elderly. In the next year, Prairie Harvest Mental Health will begin plans to become a Certified Behavioral Health Clinic. This model will enable expansion into other sources of revenue such as private pay.

The potential for Prairie Harvest Mental Health to grow and thrive is apparent. Greater emphasis can be placed upon community partnerships with other providers. In the past, referrals to Prairie Harvest Mental Health were made solely by Northeast Human Service Center. Currently we are expanding that to include open referrals from self-referral, family referral or from others such as hospitals, clinics, and other providers.

The standards we set are designed around the needs of the people we serve. To better serve people with mental health concerns, Prairie Harvest Mental Health is an active partner with a number of agencies. Efforts are made to stress the importance of client choice in housing and service providers.

Primary Partners:

- ND Behavioral Health Division – Support includes trainings and grant revenue.
- Northeast Human Service Center – Support includes services to clients such as psychiatry and nursing as well as assessments. Also currently working with the Regional Director as Northeast Human Service Center refocuses community provider referrals.
- Other Providers – Support includes housing, support services, homeless efforts (Continuum of Care and ND Homeless Coalition).
- Social Service Zones – Support includes 1915(i) Assessments, food stamps, heating assistance, and support services.

Prairie Harvest Mental Health has been working closely with teams of professionals from the ND Behavior Health Division as well as Northeast Human Service Center to ensure that clients are given the opportunity to live and succeed in the community. The State is serving people who have the highest needs which they determine to be a score of over 50 on the World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule. Prairie Harvest Mental Health and other providers serve the remaining individuals in need of behavioral health services.

Other changes that have occurred and are continuing include implementing an Electronic Health Records System, purchased/up-graded IT (Information Technology) equipment with

support, providing on-going testing and training for staff, and hiring professional positions to comply with Medicaid and other program requirements. Examples of professional positions required include a Licensed Clinical Professional and Registered Nurse.

We see great opportunities for growth. Behavioral health services are needed across all aspects of life. Currently we offer services to clients with mental health concerns. The mission of Prairie Harvest Mental Health is to promote recovery and an enhanced quality of life for adults with mental health concerns. As we grow this mission, we will expand to include other behavioral health services and will expand into services across the life cycle.

Thank you for considering our request.

Debra Johnson, CEO