



January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Relating to providing an appropriation to the Department of Health and Human Services for a pilot program for support services for youth at risk.

Dear Chairman Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

On behalf of Prairie St. John's, I would like to thank you for your continued support and commitment to serving the youth of our state with supportive services. My name is Josh Sayler and I have been working in behavioral health for over 16 years, the last 5 ½ years with Prairie St. John's, a crisis behavioral health hospital. I humbly ask for your support of SB 2268. Fraser, Ltd. has offered supportive services to at-risk youth through their Stepping Stones Resource Center for 14 years. As someone who has interacted with Stepping Stones Resource Center staff and the services they provide over the past decade, I can attest to the quality of services offered and the immense current need for these services.

At Prairie St. John's we have seen the need for behavioral health services continue to trend up at an alarming rate over the last several years. In 2020 Prairie St. John's took 2,730 calls for inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services for children and adolescents. In 2021, we took 3,700 calls seeking services for this same population. There is tremendous value in putting resources towards prevention and treatment for such a vulnerable population. A population that needs the services and advocacy that Fraser, Ltd. and the Stepping Stones Resource Center has been providing.

It is critical that Fraser, Ltd. receive operational funding support to continue this crucial work. As such Prairie St. John's is in support of SB 2268 to provide this funding.

Thank you again for your commitment to the behavioral health needs of our residents. Please feel free to contact me at my information below if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

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