

HB 1012 Testimony
House Appropriations-Human Resources Division
Representative Nelson, Chairman
January 27, 2025

Chairman Nelson and members of the House Appropriations-Human Resources Division Committee, my name is Carlotta McCleary. I am the Executive Director for both North Dakota Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NDFFCMH) and Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND). NDFFCMH is a parent run organization focused on the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders and their families. MHAND's mission is to promote mental health through education, advocacy, understanding and access to quality care for all individuals. Today I am testifying as the Executive Director for Mental Health America of North Dakota.

MHAND supports HB 1012 but has concerns with the proposed budget for the Mountainbrooke Recovery Center operated in Grand Forks, North Dakota. MHAND operates Mountainbrooke Recovery Center, under contract from Northeast Human Service Center. Recovery Centers are referred to as psycho-social rehabilitation centers in North Dakota Century Code and North Dakota Administrative Code, are part of an integrated, multi-disciplinary continuum of services for individuals with serious mental illness and/or those struggling with co-occurring disorders. There are eight regional recovery centers in North Dakota. Recovery Centers are a place where consumers can become educated about their mental illness and its treatment and where consumers can learn about the resources, they need to achieve their individualized recovery goals. They offer a range of skill-building and recovery activities. Mountainbrooke Recovery Center is one of the largest recovery centers in the state, with 230 members and an average daily

attendance of 30 to 35. Mountainbrooke has a staff of 5: 1 full-time employee and 4 part-time employees. All Mountainbrooke staff are individuals with lived experience.

From 2015 to 2019, MHAND did not receive an increase in the budget. During the last biennium, MHAND received an \$16,672 inflationary increase over the biennium, but our rent increase surpassed that amount, to \$22,320 for the biennium. To be clear, that rent increase is still at nearly half market value. However, our landlord has asked us to increase it to market value. Our monthly expenses are \$18,730, but we currently receive \$15,752.39 in contract reimbursement. That shows we are nearly \$3,000 in the red every month. Our health insurance premiums have increased 7.5% each year and our electricity costs have increased about 10% since the last biennium. Due to the number of members present each day, we try to have two staff on at all times. We could use more staff for additional coverage, but our budget constraints do not allow it.

MHAND has addressed this with Northeast Human Service Center during the interim, providing documentation about our current expenses and our desire to both address the current shortfall and our needs for the upcoming biennium. Ultimately these requests were not included in the Governor's budget.

Mental Health America of ND believes that this is an integral service, and our staff believe in the mission of the recovery centers. However, MHAND does not have enough funds to continue operating Mountainbrooke Recovery Center at a loss.

Thank you for your time and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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