

## Written Testimony on HB1012 relating to Substance Use Disorder Voucher (1-29-2025)

Chairman Nelson and members of the House Human Resources Committee, for the record my name is Dave Marion, and I have the great fortune of working for the Prairie Recovery Center, located in rural Raleigh, North Dakota. Prairie Recovery Center is a one of a kind, committed residential agency working with individuals seeking addiction and mental health services. PRC provides short-term one of a kind residential service in a rural environment for recovery with committed staff and therapists experienced in substance use, mental health and trauma informed work. We pride ourselves on not being a cookie cutter program and client centered.

We are in support of the full funding of the ND Substance Use Disorder Voucher Program and its amazing impact that it has on so many through ND that received treatment in a timely manner and not sit on waiting lists. The SUD Voucher Program has served as a safety net for those without health insurance or adequate resources to access addiction treatment in ND and has been lifesaving. Many of these individuals are referred to us by parents, parole and probation, regional human service center and physicians. Most of these individuals have experienced an overdose in their lives and are at extreme risk and are referred to by professionals that find a lack of services for those most extreme needs. Over 210 individuals have been helped since July 2023 at the Prairie Recovery Center from the SUD Voucher. 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 as well of the bottle neck of waiting lists in the past. In addition, the voucher serves as a resource to keep patients out of emergency rooms, hospital beds and revolving doors in jails, and courts and get the treatment they need to change their life and get the confidence to do great things.

It is imperative that we not create more hurdles or restrict individuals from getting great quality services, at whatever level that is in the continuum of care. The SUD Voucher was established and supported by the Dept of Health and Human Services to address barriers to treatment and increase the ability of people to access treatment and services for substance use disorders. With one of the goals being to allow the individual to choose a provider with objectives to increase the number of providers and service options and those options communicated to individuals. Another Goal being able to improve access to quality services with objectives of SUD providers to provide evidence-based services on an individual need, in addition to reduce financial barriers for individuals accessing needed services.

With the ongoing pandemic that compounded, high alcoholism rates, Opioid Crisis and Meth resurgence we respectfully ask your support of full request for the voucher. Though some may see a significant cost, the effect on less emergency room visits, revolving door jail and court visits has been impactful. For those of us who serve patients that want better and are committed to changing their path know that The SUD Voucher has and will continue save lives and Prairie Recovery Center is a committed and a proven provider to do so.

Respectfully,

Dave Marion

