

Honorable Members of the Legislature,

My name is Allison Wanner, and I am a Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor here in North Dakota. I moved to North Dakota almost 12 years ago, and started out my career in this field at the Dakota Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center, where I worked as a human relations counselor for many years. I then transitioned and decided to further my career and became an addiction counselor in 2019. I transitioned from the prison, after being there for 10.5 years, and am currently working at the SWMCCC Community Treatment Program, in which we provide many supports and treatment groups for individuals in our county jail, NDSP inmates, parole and probation clients and many community members in Stark County, ND. The SUD voucher program is extremely important to our organization as it provides a financial mean for many of our clients to get the help they need and to start their life over on the right path to recovery.

As a licensed clinical addiction counselor dedicated to supporting individuals on their path to recovery, I urge you to recognize the critical importance of the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) voucher program in North Dakota. This initiative is not merely a financial tool; it is a lifeline for many of our most vulnerable citizens who struggle with substance use disorders and lack the financial resources to access essential treatment services.

Substance use disorder is a chronic, treatable condition that requires timely and comprehensive intervention. However, far too many individuals in our state face significant barriers to accessing care due to financial constraints and gaps in insurance coverage. The SUD voucher addresses these disparities by providing crucial funding for treatment services such as inpatient and outpatient care, peer support, and recovery housing. Without this program, many individuals—especially those in rural and underserved areas—would be left without viable treatment options, exacerbating the ongoing addiction crisis in North Dakota.

From a clinical perspective, early and sustained access to treatment significantly improves outcomes, reducing the social and economic burden of substance use disorders on families, communities, and the healthcare system. Studies consistently show that individuals who receive timely treatment are more likely to achieve long-term recovery, maintain employment, and avoid interactions with the criminal justice system. The SUD voucher directly contributes to these positive outcomes by eliminating financial barriers and ensuring that treatment is based on need rather than the ability to pay.

Furthermore, investing in the SUD voucher program is a fiscally responsible decision. The cost of untreated substance use disorders—including emergency room visits, incarceration, and lost productivity—far outweighs the cost of providing early and effective treatment. By continuing to support and expand this program, North Dakota can proactively address the addiction crisis, strengthen communities, and reduce the long-term economic impact of untreated substance use.

I urge you to support and advocate for continued funding and expansion of the SUD voucher program. This initiative is a testament to North Dakota's commitment to compassionate, evidence-based solutions that prioritize public health and community well-being. Our state must

stand firm in ensuring that all individuals struggling with substance use disorder have the opportunity to receive the treatment they need to reclaim their lives.

Thank you for your time and commitment to this critical issue.

Sincerely,  
Allison Wanner, MS LCAC  
SWMCCC Community Treatment Program