

Written Testimony

House Appropriations Committee -Human Resources Section

February 5, 2025

Testimony of Mark Johnston

Avel eCare Crisis Care

Chairman Nelson, Vice Chair Stemen, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB1012, and the impact of Avel eCare Crisis Care in supporting the citizens of North Dakota.

Avel eCare Crisis Care is a telemedicine service that provides immediate, 24/7 access to behavioral health professionals, ensuring that citizens in crisis receive timely and appropriate care. Our mission is to strengthen North Dakota's behavioral health system by supporting first responders, and communities with virtual crisis intervention, reducing unnecessary emergency room visits and law enforcement involvement while improving patient outcomes.

Through our partnership with the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders across the state, Avel eCare Crisis Care has significantly improved access to mental health care- especially in rural and underserved areas where provider shortages pose a challenge. By leveraging telemedicine, we bring behavioral health expertise to the point of crisis, allowing for real-time assessments, de-escalation, and care coordination, ultimately keeping individuals in their communities whenever possible.

Since expanding our services in North Dakota, we have:

- Provided nearly 200 virtual crisis consultations, reducing wait times for critical mental health evaluations.
- Partnered with NDHHS and the Regional CMHC's to ensure that patients in crisis receive care without unnecessary transfers.
- Assisted law enforcement by offering immediate access to mental health professionals, reducing the strain on local resources.
- Helped divert individuals from unnecessary hospitalization and incarceration by offering community-based crisis stabilization.

Our work aligns with North Dakota's commitment to strengthening behavioral health services and ensuring access to care for all residents. Continued support for crisis care services, including telemedicine, is essential to addressing workforce shortages, improving patient outcomes, and reducing the financial burden on emergency departments, law enforcement agencies, and ultimately the taxpayers.





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We appreciate the legislature's ongoing leadership in addressing behavioral health needs in North Dakota. Avele eCare Crisis Care is committed to being a strong partner in this effort, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate further to enhance crisis response services across the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

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