

Chairman Nelson and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Haley Holt, and I reside in Watford City. I work with Endeavor Sober Living serving individuals from across the state at our facilities in McKenzie County and Ward County. I would like to express our support for HB 1012, particularly as it pertains to the North Dakota Behavioral Health Division, including funding for the Recovery Housing Assistance Program (RHAP) and the Opioid Settlement Fund.

Recovery Housing Assistance Program

Endeavor Sober Living opened its first house in October 2021 in Watford City with eight beds. Recognizing the critical need for recovery housing, we quickly expanded and now have the capacity to serve 34 men in McKenzie County and 20 women in Minot.

Our sober living communities provide individuals in recovery with a safe, supportive and substance-free environment. RHAP enables individuals - often transitioning from residential substance use disorder treatment - to focus on their recovery while rebuilding their lives. It gives them an alternative to unsafe living conditions, high-risk social environments, and, in some cases, family connections that could hinder their recovery.

At present, we have 32 male residents and 12 female residents, with 10 men and 8 women participants enrolled in RHAP. Most of the other individuals residing in our sober living houses have utilized RHAP during their time with us. In 2024, approximately 80 individuals received housing assistance through RHAP while residing in one of our homes.

The proposed budget would support approximately 172 beds, a dramatic decrease to current capacity of 265 approved beds reported by the Behavioral Health Division team. Additionally, there is a waitlist with a reported need for 296 beds for expansion projects and new providers.

Endeavor Sober Living is on the waitlist for two separate programs.

1. A sober living facility in Williston, where no such facilities exist. Currently, individuals seeking recovery housing must go to McKenzie County for men and Minot or Dickinson for women.
2. Our second request is for additional housing in Minot to help ensure that we can offer a safe place for all women including pregnant and parenting women along with their children.

The proposed additional funding is critical to ensure RHAP does not have to turn away individuals who meet the necessary requirements for the program. Without adequate funding, too many people in recovery will be left without the stable, supportive housing they long for to rebuild their lives.

Opioid Settlement Fund

Through the 2023-2025 biennium, \$8 million was appropriated to HHS from the Opioid Settlement Fund. From these funds, Endeavor Sober Living received grant funding to establish a women's sober living house in Minot. This grant enabled us to remodel a six-unit apartment complex that we purchased, updating it with modern finishings, new furniture, and appliances. Additionally, we built a playground on-site to provide a safe space for children visiting their mothers. The grant also allowed us to purchase two vans to transport participants to support group meetings, substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, mental health services, medical appointments, and other essential activities.

Our facility can accommodate up to 20 women plus house managers. Since welcoming our first participants in March, we have provided a safe, sober living environment for 44 women, the majority of whom are pregnant and parenting mothers. While in our program, these women are actively engaged in a 12-Step program, volunteering within the Minot community, securing employment, rebuilding their lives, reconnecting with their children and families, and developing a strong support network.

With the remaining funds, we plan to expand our capacity in Minot by creating a sober living environment where mothers and their children can reside together. This initiative will help address the barriers mothers face in accessing SUD

treatment and support services, particularly when securing stable, sober housing for themselves and their children in North Dakota.

Without this funding, the project would have relied solely on self-funding and would have progressed in phases, limiting the number of women we could serve. Thanks to this support, we have been able to make a profound impact on the lives of many women and families in our community.

In summary, these two programs have been instrumental in expanding access to safe, stable, and supportive housing for individuals in recovery. By providing critical funding, these initiatives have removed financial barriers, allowing organizations like ours to create an immediate and lasting change in the lives of individuals overcoming substance use disorders. The impact of this investment extends beyond housing—it fosters recovery, strengthens families, and rebuilds communities. As we continue to expand our services, the ongoing support of these programs will be essential in breaking cycles of addiction, reducing relapse rates, and empowering individuals to build independent, fulfilling lives in sobriety.

Respectfully,

Haley Holt