

Chairman Nelson and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Jonathan Layne, and I live in Watford City. I am the founder/owner of Providence House, Providence House Minot, and Endeavor Sober Living. I am here today to express my strong support for House Bill 1012, particularly as it pertains to Behavioral Health Division programs - the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Voucher Program, the Recovery Housing Assistance Program (RHAP), and the Opioid Settlement Fund. These programs are not just policy measures - they are lifelines that allow individuals to reclaim their lives, rebuild relationships, and reintegrate into our communities.

The greatest gift I have ever received is sobriety. My journey through addiction took me to some of the darkest places imaginable, but through the grace of recovery, I have found freedom, purpose, and a life beyond my wildest dreams. This gift was not something I found on my own - it was given to me because someone took the time to show me that recovery was possible. They extended their hand when I was lost, and because of that act and gift of kindness, I stand here today.

Without a safe place to heal, to learn, and to rebuild, I don't know where I would be. These programs, these lifelines, are what so many in our community rely on as a foundation to begin their journey. Today, in North Dakota, we have the incredible opportunity to be that light for others. To offer hope where there was once despair. To help more people than I ever imagined possible.

The programs that the state of North Dakota and BHD have put in place are not just initiatives; they are beacons of hope. They give people a fighting chance when the world feels like it's closing in. Without them, so many would be left with nowhere to turn.

I am beyond honored and deeply proud to be a small part of something so much bigger than myself. Recovery is not just about getting sober, it's about rebuilding lives, restoring families, and giving people a chance to truly live again. I am living proof that it works. And as long as I have the ability to give back, I will continue to do so, because someone once did it for me.

Providence House opened in July 2022 and is located in McKenzie County, just outside of Watford City. We were initially a coed program but have transitioned into a facility for men. We have served 315 unique individuals through January 2025. In December 2023 we opened Providence House Minot for women, focusing on pregnant and parenting women, and have served 168 unique clients through January 2025.

We are excited for the next phase of this program that will allow for parenting women to receive residential treatment with their children. This project aims to address a gap

identified in the state and a huge barrier faced by moms in our state. We are in the construction phase and anticipate opening late spring early summer this year.

Along with many of the individuals we currently serve, we anticipate individuals we will serve in this program we are pioneering will rely on programs covered under HB 1012 such as SUD Voucher and RHAP.

### **SUD Voucher Program**

At Providence House, we see firsthand how the SUD Voucher Program removes barriers to treatment. Addiction often leaves individuals financially devastated, making access to care nearly impossible for many. The SUD Voucher ensures that those without insurance or financial resources can receive the critical support they need. In 2024 Providence house served 64 individuals that accessed care through this program. We had many other individuals that were approved for the program but were able to obtain insurance before needing to use funds from the SUD Voucher program.

As a Non-IMD program we feel it is important to ensure funds are allocated separately as laid out in House Bill 1012. This allows for smaller community based programs like ours to continue serving clients on a smaller scale with an emphasis placed on person centered care and a building a strong recovery community that supports and encourages those around them.

### **Recovery Housing Assistance Program (RHAP)**

At Endeavor Sober Living, we know that stable, sober housing is a cornerstone of recovery. Since opening in 2021, we have expanded to serve 34 men in McKenzie County and 20 women in Minot. RHAP provides funding for individuals to reside in a safe, structured environment where they can continue their recovery while rebuilding their lives. Without this support, many would be forced into unsafe living situations that can jeopardize their sobriety.

In 2024, RHAP helped approximately 80 individuals in our homes. However, the proposed budget supports only 172 beds statewide, far below the current 265 approved beds and a waitlist for an additional 296. Endeavor Sober Living is on the waitlist to open the first sober living facility in Williston—where no such resource currently exists—as well as additional housing in Minot to support women, including pregnant and parenting mothers. Increased funding is crucial to ensure that no one who qualifies for RHAP is turned away.

### **Opioid Settlement Funds**

Through an Opioid Settlement Fund grant, Endeavor Sober Living was able to open a women's sober living house in Minot, transforming a six-unit apartment complex into a

safe, supportive space for up to 20 women. Many of these women are pregnant or parenting, working hard to rebuild their lives while staying engaged in 12-Step programs, securing employment, and reconnecting with their families.

These funds have allowed us to make an immediate impact, including adding a playground for children and purchasing transportation to help residents attend treatment, medical appointments, and support meetings. Moving forward, we plan to create a sober living environment where mothers and their children can reside together, a much-needed resource in North Dakota. Without this funding, this project would have been delayed or significantly limited in its reach.

I cannot overstate the dedication of the HHS and BHD teams, who have been invaluable partners in helping us navigate challenges, refine programs, and ensure we are connected with the right resources to best serve our clients. Their commitment and willingness to assist do not go unnoticed. Their work in coordinating providers, facilitating timely funding, and expanding access to care has a direct and lasting impact on the lives of those we serve. We are deeply grateful for their unwavering support and the critical role they play in these initiatives.

In conclusion, House Bill 1012 is a compassionate, practical, and necessary step in addressing substance use disorders in North Dakota. Investing in the SUD Voucher Program, RHAP, and the Opioid Settlement Fund is more than just funding treatment—it is an investment in people, families, and the strength of our communities. These programs not only provide immediate relief but also create lasting change, restoring dignity and hope to those working toward a better future. We urge you to support this bill and continue prioritizing the health and well-being of our residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Layne