

Testimony on HB 1012 Behavioral Health Section

Senate Appropriations-Human Resources Committee

March 26th, 2025

Chairman Dever and members of the Senate Human Resources Committee, for the record my name is Dave Marion, and I have privilege working for the Prairie Recovery Center, located near 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 residential service and out-patient services 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 being client centered in all our service delivery and aftercare work.

We are in support of HB 1012 as amended especially for the Behavioral Health Division services. This includes the full funding, including the Governor's Budget request for 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. With the SUD voucher it has allowed more access as a diversion to jail or incarceration for chronic SUD offenses for individuals that have not been treated, which has been a major talking point, and the Voucher has made it possible to tackle this concern. Currently, approximately 65-70% of individuals fall into this area as a diversion to incarceration. The Prairie Recovery Center works alongside many law enforcement agencies and Parole and Probation to get individuals the help needed to get out of the cycle they are in along with a strong aftercare plan and accountability in their recovery. The Prairie recovery Center also supports great partnerships and work with Community Connect, Free through Recovery and Peer Support services, which are valuable pieces to the continuum of care in recovery for individuals to be successful in their recovery.

The current funding for the voucher was split up into IMD (Institutions for Mental Disease and more than 16 beds) and Non IMD facilities (16 beds or less). The appropriated funds were split 55% for non IMD and 45% for non IMD's, not knowing how the utilization would be at that time. We are in support of the 50-50 amended change knowing more on the utilization of this biennium. This opportunity for committed local providers like Prairie Recovery Center gave more individuals service in a timely manner without long delays to get services on waiting lists that were as long 6-8 weeks. The Prairie Recovery Center has served 245 individuals since July of 2023. The SUD Voucher is accomplishing its goals, and the high utilization really shows the great need for those that qualify for this funding for services. PRC works with law enforcement, jails, parole and probation as a diversion to the revolving door on jails and emergency rooms. The Departments SUD Voucher team works with PRC and looks at all the applications for eligibility and the state qualify them for the voucher program. The SUD Voucher program is supported and endorsed by Dept. Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health Division and has been a great option for many that want and need help with their Addiction and Mental health concerns at the time they need it. Thanks for your time on this very important matter.

Dave Marion