

**Comments to the Health Care Reform Review Committee 25 July 2012**

Chairman Keiser and members of the Health Care Reform Review Committee

My name is Greg LaFrancois. I am the CEO of Prairie St. John's in Fargo where we are honored to serve our community in the provision of behavioral health services. Those services span the entire continuum of behavioral healthcare to include acute hospitalization, partial hospitalization, residential care, chemical dependency rehabilitation, and outpatient services. We have the opportunity to serve citizens of every demographic and financial situation. Demand for our services grows steadily and touches every healthcare provider in the state.

I am thankful to be given the opportunity to comment and applaud your willingness to listen to those of us on the front lines of care. Health care is a team sport. I need all providers to be successful in their work to be successful in mine. We as providers need payers to be successful in their work so we are able to continue ours. An imbalance in any component of the team directly and negatively impacts care to our communities. As you proceed with your work, I am hopeful that any system to resource the uninsured addresses their total health. As evidenced in countless research efforts, medical problems very often occur in tandem with behavioral health problems. Access to care inclusive of mental illness and chemical dependency services is essential to overall population health. In addition, such a system must be straightforward so that our citizens understand their coverage and any treatment options.

Again I thank you for this opportunity to comment and will keep you in my thoughts as you tackle the complexities ahead.

This is important work and we need you to be successful.

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