

House Appropriations Human Resources Division
Representative Jon O. Nelson, Chairman
SB 2015 – In Favor
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Lisa Peterson, PhD
Regional Facility Administrator
Management & Training Corporation
ND Lobbyist #1578

Management & Training Corporation, or MTC, was founded in 1981 with the mission of giving people hope, skills, and opportunities for a better life. MTC's initial focus was on operating federal job corps centers in order to provide at-risk youth with educational and vocational training opportunities, along with other vital services. MTC is still the largest provider of job corps services to date. In the mid-1980s, MTC expanded to provide correctional and detention facility operations, medical, and rehabilitation supports. MTC operates 16 facilities in five states, along with the Parklea Correctional Centre in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. We also operate 11 facility medical departments, 19 correctional treatment programs, three re-entry centers, and two community-based behavioral health programs.

In 2022, MTC worked in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to launch MTC Lives Transformed with gratitude for the legislative appropriation necessary to do so. Lives Transformed provides outpatient behavioral health services to justice-involved adults using a combination of telehealth and in-person delivery models to prioritize access to care for people in rural, underserved communities. We have offices in Williston, Minot, and Rolla. Lives Transformed provides diagnostic assessments to determine our clients' substance use disorder and mental health treatment needs. We provide level 2.1 and level 1 substance use disorder treatment, along with group services to address anger management issues, criminal thinking, and co-occurring substance use disorder and post-traumatic stress. We deliver Level 1 aftercare services via telehealth to people across the state who cannot, for whatever reason, access this treatment in their home communities. We also provide treatment to people on DOCR inmate status who are housed in the Ward County transitional work release program, as well as DOCR inmate status clients housed in the McKenzie County Jail in addition to being a provider of care coordination and peer support for Free Through Recovery and Community Connect.

For years, DOCR officials have noticed that justice-involved adults face substantial barriers in access to behavioral health treatment and this has caused low risk folks to be incarcerated in order to receive necessary care, at great cost to the state. Such barriers include long wait times, no openings in needed group treatment, childcare, transportation, insurance, and lack of availability of programs that address criminal risk along with behavioral health conditions. This program was developed to address those barriers. We are seeing early indicators of success in our outcome data. To date, there has been a 78.6 percent decrease in respondents who endorsed using substances at discharge compared to intake. There is a 116 percent increase in participant employment at discharge compared to intake. Seventy percent described their physical health as improved or unchanged and 80% reported their mental health either improved or was unchanged with 49 percent indicating their mental health improved with program participation.

MTC Lives Transformed does bill Medicaid, the SUD Voucher, and private insurance, when possible, but we have encountered difficulties in being reimbursed by these programs. Clients often fail to provide their insurance information or earn too much to be eligible for such programs, but not enough to afford private insurance or the out-of-pocket cost of care. Currently there is an allocation of \$1,750,000 in Senate Bill 2015 designated for community-based behavioral healthcare across several providers. MTC's operating expenses alone for 2025-2027 will total \$2 million.

We intend to continue to leverage other funding sources whenever possible. With the cost of incarcerating someone in North Dakota hovering around \$50,000 per year, if we prevent just 41 people per year from requiring incarceration, there is a cost savings to the state. Accessible and effective treatment can keep people safely in their home community, contributing to society rather than taking a bed in an already overcrowded prison system. We request that these programs be fully funded to a budget not to exceed \$2.5 million to ensure that these vital programs continue to reach those who need them and make a positive impact on the safety of our communities. Thank you for your consideration.