

**Testimony on Amending Behavioral Health Bed Management Reporting
Requirements for Geropsychiatric Facilities**

House Human Services Committee

March 12, 2025

Senate Bill 2113

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Maren Gemar, and I am the CEO/Administrator of SMP Health-St. Raphael in Valley City, ND. Our facility has been proud to offer geropsychiatric services since 1999 and was the first skilled nursing facility in the state to open a geropsych unit. Today, we provide specialized care to 32 residents. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of fourth engrossed Senate Bill 2113. I am specifically referring to the amendment regarding the Bed Management System on page 30, lines 5-17. While we recognize the value of this system in improving transparency of available services, the amendment is necessary to correct an unintended and unnecessary burden. Requiring geropsychiatric skilled nursing facilities to report open beds every 24 hours created a critical challenge, and this change ensures a more practical and effective approach.

Since our geropsych unit opened, our average length of stay is 691 days, so just under 2 years. Residents come to our facility when they are stable from a stay in the ND State Hospital or Acute behavioral setting or when their behavioral health no longer allows them to remain in a traditional skilled nursing setting. There is far less movement for admissions and discharges than in the traditional skilled nursing setting or other behavioral health settings.

Admissions in 2024: 5 (3 external)

2-State Hospital

1-Other ND SNF Facility

2-other part of our facility

Discharges in 2024: 5 (3 external)

3-deaths

2-other part of our facility

As St. Raphael has geropsych unit, memory care unit, and traditional skilled nursing, we understand the challenge of needing to find appropriate placement for someone who is in the wrong setting. The Bed Management system is helpful in knowing where to look for services. However, the current requirement of before noon, daily is creating significant burden and is not useful to individuals or providers looking for services. Our admissions are preplanned to ensure specialty medications and services are in place. If an opening would happen to come on a weekend, there is not yet the capacity to be able to admit to that room same day or that same weekend.

The current software system allows the ability for carryover reporting. So, updates we make on Friday (or the day before a weekend), would show as accurate for the next day until a change would be made. By updating report weekly and within forty - eight hours of a bed becoming available, it would free up some of the administrative burden, allowing us to better utilize support staff and focus on care for the residents while still maintaining accurate information in the Bed Management system for providers to refer for services.

Thank you for considering this important proposed amendment. We are proud of the behavioral long term care services we provide at St. Raphael every day and look forward to continuing to meet this need in North Dakota.

Maren Gemar, MBA, LNHA
CEO/Administrator
SMP Health-St. Raphael
979 Central Ave N
Valley City, ND 58072
701-845-8210
Maren.gemar@smphs.org