

Chairman Dever and members of the committee,

My name is Jeremy Traen. I have been an employee of ShareHouse since 2006 and have served in various roles. I became a licensed addiction counselor in 2011 and was appointed President and CEO of ShareHouse in 2023. My personal mission as an employee of ShareHouse has always been to provide the most robust substance use disorder (SUD) services in the state. Today, I am testifying in support of HB1012.

ShareHouse first started as a halfway house in 1975 located in Fargo and has since expanded its services. Today, we operate residential treatment programs for all North Dakota residents in Fargo and Grand Forks. We also provide recovery housing, outpatient SUD treatment, standalone mental health services, and medication-assisted treatment in Fargo. Several of these services are available via telehealth, which we intend to continue expanding to better reach rural communities in North Dakota. I am proud to say that in 2024, ShareHouse served just under 1,500 unique clients across all services. Of those, 380 clients were funded by the SUD Voucher offered by the State. Just over 300 clients were served in ShareHouse's IMD facility in Fargo. At any given time, ShareHouse has more than 30 SUD Voucher clients receiving residential services in Fargo.

When I was originally hired at ShareHouse, I worked as a Behavioral Health Technician at Robinson Recovery Center (RRC), which operated with a North Dakota grant for uninsured citizens needing residential treatment for methamphetamine use. As I understand it, RRC served as a precursor to our current SUD Voucher program. Over the years, I have witnessed the development of the Voucher and its enormous impact on North Dakotans throughout the state. It is a testament to the strong collaboration between providers, state departments, and legislators.

I would like to share several brief success stories about the SUD Voucher, written by ShareHouse team members:

- One individual initially seemed unready for treatment, and we feared they would leave early. However, they remained in treatment, engaged in the process, and struggled with the transition to the next steps because they felt they were learning so much. Over time, their confidence grew, their hope returned, and they built a community with others in treatment. Seeing their transformation was inspiring.
- A gentleman became deeply involved in the AA and NA communities, working through the 12 steps. Through his sponsor, he secured a job managing a property, which allowed him to save enough to get his own place. After experiencing a significant loss in his family, he relied on the support he built through treatment and remained sober, crediting his connections for his success.
- A woman in her 30s and her parents were incredibly grateful for the Voucher. She was in a financial gap—earning too much to qualify for some assistance but lacking insurance for residential treatment. With the Voucher's support, she was able to complete a full continuum of care, including outpatient and aftercare.



Her parents actively participated in her counseling sessions, and the family repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the services she received. She later became a Recovery Living client.

- A man in his 30s initially completed five months of treatment, from residential through LIOP. After a relapse six months later, he returned for a brief stay—one month of residential care followed by one month of LIOP. Feeling confident in his recovery, he reengaged with his support network in the community and has remained sober. He continues to refer others to treatment and employs individuals in recovery.
- A woman in her 30s needed to remain near her father, who was battling cancer. The Voucher allowed her to receive treatment locally, enabling her to spend time with him in his final weeks. While we do not know where she is today, we do know that she had the opportunity to receive care when she needed it most—thanks to the Voucher.

The \$2.5 million additional funding for the SUD Voucher will be a significant asset in combating addiction across North Dakota. These funds will help create more success stories like those I have shared. I fully support this investment and appreciate the committee's understanding of the urgent need for these resources. Expanding the Voucher will allow providers across the state to enhance services and reach more individuals in need.

During the 2023 legislative session, a decision was made to allocate only 45% of SUD Voucher funds to IMD facilities to prevent them from consuming the entire budget. However, this led to a projected shortfall for IMD providers and a projected surplus for non-IMD providers—almost identical in amount. Fortunately, the Behavioral Health Division and the Department of Health and Human Services were able to reallocate funds, preventing facilities like ShareHouse from having to pause admissions for up to 250 North Dakota citizens who rely on the SUD Voucher. The House has since adjusted the allocation to 50% and provided a more flexible mechanism for further adjustments in the next biennium if needed.

Finally, the additional funding for medical expense reimbursement within the SUD Voucher is a critical improvement. As an IMD facility, we sometimes serve clients without insurance, which can create barriers to accessing essential resources. This adjustment, along with the other proposed changes, will further strengthen the Voucher program and increase positive outcomes for North Dakotans struggling with addiction.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Traen
President/CEO
ShareHouse, Inc.

