

2025 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

HB 1337

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1337
1/22/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for grants to counties for mental health services for incarcerated individuals; and to provide for a report.

2:58 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Ruby, Vice-Chairman Frelich, Representatives Anderson, Beltz, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Rios, Rohr, Members

Discussion Topics:

- Benefits for inmates
- Fewer disciplinary actions
- Fill funding gap
- Safety for previously incarcerated persons

2:58 p.m. Representative K. Anderson, District 19, introduced the bill.

2:59 p.m. Senator Mathern, District 11, testified in favor and submitted testimony, #30779.

3:01 p.m. Allen Anderson, Director and Administrator, Walsh County Health District, testified in favor, and submitted testimony, #30261.

3:06 p.m. Heidi Jensen, Co-owner of Agassiz Associates PLLC, testified in favor, and submitted testimony, #30365.

3:29 p.m. Joelle Schmuck, RN from the Walsh County Health District, testified in favor, and submitted testimony, #30460.

3:36 p.m. Captain Adam Trahan, Chief Corrections Officer, Walsh County Correctional Center, testified in favor, and submitted testimony #30526.

3:42 p.m. Kristi Brintnell, Walsh County Commission Chairman, testified in favor, and submitted testimony, #30221.

3:50 p.m. Danelle Preski, North Dakota Association of Counties, testified in favor.

3:56 p.m. Pam Sagness, Department of Behavioral Health and Human Services, provided neutral testimony and answered questions from the committee, #30842.

Additional written testimony:

Heather Baker submitted testimony in favor, #29769.

Jennifer Sunstrom, Teacher at Grafton County Public Schools, submitted testimony in favor, #29981.

Kiera Anderson submitted testimony in favor, #30200.

Lacy Corneliusen submitted testimony in favor, #30357.

Emily Foss, Lake Region Law Center, submitted testimony in favor, #30419.

Brenda Weiler submitted testimony in favor, #30478.

Kaci Sharpe, WIC Director at Walsh County Health District, submitted testimony in favor, #30501.

Cheryl Harlow, Member of Walsh County Substance Abuse Coalition Committee, submitted testimony in favor, #30516.

Jana Theisen submitted testimony in favor, #30597.

Ronald Jurgens, Walsh County Sheriff's Office, submitted testimony, #30599.

Micheal Dulitz submitted testimony in favor, #30672.

4:04 p.m. Chairman M. Ruby adjourned the meeting.

Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk

Heather Baker
434 Western Ave
Grafton, ND 58237
heatherlebaker@outlook.com
701-520-5439
1/16/2025

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment in County Jails

1. Introduction

My name is Heather Baker, and I am a resident of Walsh County and a former Correctional Officer and Corrections Corporal with the Walsh County Correctional Center. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1337.

2. The Problem

When incarcerated, individuals lose all access to essential health insurance both federally or state funded and, in most cases, they lose access to private insurance, leaving our county jails responsible for the cost of treatment. These services are often unaffordable leaving many without the necessary care and increasing the risk of reoffending.

3. The Solution

HB1337 would fill this funding gap, allowing county jails to offer life-changing treatment programs. These services promote recovery, reduce repeat offenses, and ultimately benefit public safety and community health.

4. My Perspective

In my work as a Correctional Officer and a Corrections Corporal, I have seen many individuals have a break in their treatment and have seen how it negatively impacted not only them but also the safety of other incarcerated individuals, and the community as a whole. In my first 2.5 years as a Correctional Officer, I had to talk an individual down from a suicide attempt. He had been incarcerated while he was intoxicated. The individual had other factors going on that caused him to think his life was no longer worth living. At the time, we did not have mental health providers available for individuals to speak to. There was another individual hang himself while in the cell. He, thankfully, was found before any resuscitation was needed. He was sent to the North Dakota State Hospital for roughly 3 weeks. He was then sent back to the jail with no follow-up mental health treatment. In the last 2.5 years as a Correctional Corporal, I was a part of the leadership team that helped implement the services of Agassiz Associates LLC for the incarcerated individuals of the Walsh County Correctional Center, on the corrections side. During that time, I had personally referred many individuals to use the resource of Agassiz. I would happily let any individual talk to me about their problems, the issue comes when it involves their legal case. As correctional officers, we are mandated

reporters, and we must report anything told to us that involves their ongoing legal cases. A mental health professional does not have that limitation. Incarcerated individuals can freely talk to them about their case without fear of legal repercussions. During my time that Agassiz was providing treatment for the individuals, I had an individual come in from a mandatory hold at the hospital. Due to the nature of his arrest, he was not doing well mentally. We were able to get him treatment through Agassiz. I do believe this saved his life as he was able to talk to someone about the case without the judgement or fear of being reported.

5. **Call to Action**

I strongly urge the committee to support HB1337 and recommend its passage. This bill is a meaningful step toward improving outcomes for individuals and our communities.

6. **Closing**

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at 701-520-5439 or heatherlebaker@outlook.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Heather Baker

Jennifer Sunstrom

716 Cooper Ave.
Grafton, ND 58237
thesunstroms@gmail.com
7013602269

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment in County Jails

My name is Jennifer Sunstrom, and I am a resident of Walsh County and a teacher. I am writing to express my strong support for HB1337. I am concerned that inmates lose access to Medicaid, Medicare, Veteran Benefits, and in most cases private insurance. This leaves county jails to bear the cost of treatment. These services are often unaffordable, leaving many without care and increasing the risk of repeat offenders.

HB1337 would fill this funding gap, allowing county jails to offer life-changing treatment programs. These services promote recovery, reduce repeat offenses, and ultimately benefit public safety and community health

In my work as a public school teacher, I've seen how untreated mental health issues and addiction can perpetuate the cycle of incarceration and affect families. Often children are the ones who suffer from their caregivers choices. Providing treatment is critical to breaking this cycle. I also had a son who struggled with drug abuse and was incarcerated as a juvenile. It was a struggle to find services for him as a juvenile. He at least had the support of his family. Because of repeated offenses, many times adults have broken ties with their family and don't even have that support.

I strongly urge the committee to support HB1337 and recommend its passage. This bill is a meaningful step toward improving outcomes for individuals and our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at thesunstroms@gmail.com if you have any questions."

Sincerely,
Jennifer Sunstrom

Keira Anderson
230 Broughton Ave
Minto, ND, 58261
1/20/25

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,
Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment
in County Jails

My name is Keira Anderson, and I am from Minto, North Dakota. I am currently a student studying Psychology at the University of North Dakota. I am writing to demonstrate my support for HB1337.

In my time at the University of North Dakota, I have learned that the recidivism rate is alarmingly high, with around half of prisoners being re-arrested within a year of release. This is a clear indicator that incarceration is in desperate need of reform. However, prisoners don't automatically have access to resources that will assist in rehabilitation. Costs for those resources fall onto the county jails, leaving them unable to pay for them as well.

Part of understanding the psychology behind why the recidivism rate is so high is understanding the means by which behavior is altered. Studies have shown that simply imprisoning offenders doesn't help prevent future criminal activity. By itself, punishment is not the most effective means of altering behavior. If we want to see a decrease in recidivism, jails must provide resources that assist inmates in changing behavior.

There is a current inability to cover the funding for rehabilitation in jails. HB1337 would provide this funding, and would therefore be contributing to lowering the recidivism rate. It would also contribute to lowering costs for the justice system. I believe this is an issue of utmost importance, because not only does it concern the well-being of North Dakota residents, but it also concerns the safety and quality of North Dakota as a community.

I strongly encourage the community to support HB1337 and recommend its passage. If this bill is passed, thousands of lives can be radically improved. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,
Keira Anderson
University of North Dakota Student

Good afternoon, Chairman Ruby and members of the committee. My name is Kristi Brintnell, and I am the Chair of the Walsh County Commission.

I am here today to testify on behalf of the Walsh County Commissioners in strong support of HB1337.

For years, our county has grappled with the frustrating and costly cycle of individuals being arrested, released, and then rearrested. This revolving door is a systemic challenge that burdens our law enforcement, judicial system, and taxpayers. But most importantly, it fails the individuals caught in this cycle and leaves the root causes of their incarceration unaddressed.

One of the biggest gaps we've identified is access to mental health services for individuals in custody. The time spent in jail often presents a critical opportunity to intervene, but without the necessary resources, this opportunity is lost.

In 2021, recognizing this need and urged by our Sheriff and Health District, the Walsh County Commission took a bold step. We allocated funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support mental health services in our local jail. With this funding, we secured a 3-year contract with a mental health provider who delivered comprehensive behavioral health counseling and therapy to inmates during their time in custody.

The results were remarkable. Many individuals engaged in the program, and we saw firsthand the difference that access to professional mental health care could make. For some, this was their first opportunity to address the underlying issues that contributed to their incarceration—whether it be substance use disorders, untreated mental illness, or trauma.

But while the program has shown great promise, it is not enough. The demand for these services far exceeds what our current resources can support. HB1337 represents a crucial step forward. By providing dedicated funding for mental health services in county jails, this legislation would allow counties like ours to expand access to critical care and build upon the success of programs like ours.

Investing in mental health services within jails is not just a compassionate choice—it is a practical and cost-effective one. By addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, we can reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and help individuals regain stability in their lives. This is an investment in people, in communities, and in a more sustainable justice system.

On behalf of the Walsh County Commission, I urge you to support HB1337 and ensure counties have the resources they need to break the cycle of incarceration and provide meaningful opportunities for change.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Testimony
To the
Human Service Committee
on
HB 1337

Good afternoon, Chairman Ruby and members of the committee. My name is Allen Anderson and I'm the Director/Administrator for Walsh County Health District located in Grafton, North Dakota. I have been the director since 2021. Walsh County Health District has worked in conjunction with the Walsh County Commission and Agassiz Associates, PLLC to provide behavioral health services to the Walsh County Jail.

I am testifying in favor on HB1337.

When I first became the Public Health Administrator of Walsh County Health District, I was approached by our Sheriff about the complex issues surrounding people who find themselves jailed. He expressed to me that there was a great need to address the behavioral health needs of people being jailed because of the revolving door of people leaving jail and being arrested over and over again for the same issues. It was clear to both of us that the current model of incarceration was not an effective model of true rehabilitation.

In my other discussions with Walsh County Commissioners, it was clear that the Commission was ready to take action to address these problems. In late 2021, the Walsh County Commission voted to devote dollars to implement a comprehensive behavioral health treatment program for inmates in the Walsh County Jail. Agassiz Associates, PLLC in Grand Forks was subcontracted to carry out the services for a period of 3 years. Their team of licensed professionals were able to provide group therapy, individual counseling, and post-release services to jailed individuals. The funding has since run out, but the needs are still great.

As I've had discussions with other colleagues across North Dakota, I've realized that there are many gaps in addressing the mental health of inmates. If we'd like to see true rehabilitation of people, attention must be given to mental health on a much broader scale. HB1337 would provide the necessary funding to continue or initiate the provision of comprehensive behavioral health services across the entire State for those in jail.

I have brought several colleagues with me today that can answer any questions about the day-to-day operations of this program, but I'd also be happy to answer any general questions that I can.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen Anderson, Administrator
Walsh County Health District

Dear Chairperson Ruby and House Human Services Committee Members,

I am writing to you as a clinician and university professor whose research agenda focuses on mental health. I have 13 (plus) years of clinical practice experience and continue to provide consulting services for mental health within a government agency. I have practiced clinically across (just to name a few) diverse fields, including inpatient psychiatric care, residential treatment, intensive in-home services, and other roles closely aligned with the correctional system. I urge you to support HB 1337, which seeks to allocate essential funding for mental health services for individuals in custody. This bill is a critical step toward addressing a profound and growing public health need that directly impacts not only those in custody but also our communities at large.

The prevalence of mental health challenges among incarcerated individuals is staggering. Many individuals in custody experience mental health issues, with many having been undiagnosed or untreated prior to their incarceration. The lack of access to appropriate mental health care within correctional facilities exacerbates these challenges, leading to a cycle of recidivism, heightened safety concerns for staff and inmates, and worsened health outcomes for individuals in custody. In my professional experience, I have witnessed firsthand how untreated mental health issues manifest within correctional environments. These issues can lead to behavioral disturbances, self-harm, and even suicide, placing an enormous burden on correctional staff and resources.

Economically, the cost of untreated mental health issues places a significant burden on our correctional and public health systems, far exceeding the investment required for adequate care. Recidivism driven by untreated mental health needs leads to repeated incarcerations, compounding costs for the criminal justice system and taxpayers. These additional expenses include housing, healthcare, and legal processing for individuals cycling through the system, creating an unsustainable economic drain. Providing mental health care in custody is not just compassionate but also a sound fiscal strategy, as it lowers recidivism rates and allows individuals to reintegrate into society as productive workers. This, in turn, alleviates long-term public expenses and strengthens the state's economic framework.

Correctional facilities are uniquely positioned to serve as a critical point of intervention for individuals who have slipped through the cracks of our mental health care system. Addressing mental health also directly targets the growing and alarming addiction crisis, as substance abuse and addiction often stem from attempts to cope with underlying mental health challenges. By focusing on mental health, we are addressing the root causes of addiction, providing individuals with healthier, more sustainable solutions to their struggles. Incarceration often provides a rare opportunity where individuals are compelled to focus on their underlying issues, creating a crucial window to deliver therapy using a range of modalities and psychoeducation. This structured environment can facilitate meaningful engagement with mental health care, addressing challenges that many might otherwise avoid or neglect in the outside world.

By supporting HB 1337, you are advocating for a more just and humane system that prioritizes rehabilitation over punishment. This investment has the power to reduce rates of reincarceration,

allowing individuals to return to their families, rejoin the workforce, and provide for their loved ones. This not only strengthens family units but also addresses generational cycles of incarceration and poverty, creating healthier communities for future generations. Mental health funding in custody ensures that individuals receive the care they need to address underlying issues, paving the way for healthier outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. Supporting this bill is not only an investment in the well-being of individuals in custody but also a commitment to public safety and community health.

Thank you for your attention to this matter

Dr. Lacey Corneliusen, DSW, LCSW, LMSW

Heidi Jensen3602 21st Ave S.

Grand Forks, ND 58201

hjensen@agassizassociates.com

701-610-1191

01/20/2025

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment in County Jails

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Heidi Jensen, and I am a resident of Grand Forks, North Dakota. I am here because I work with agencies in rural North Dakota to bring mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) services to their communities. I have been serving rural North Dakota for over 26 years in my role as a psychologist. I have personally witnessed the difficulties that underserved populations encounter when trying to access behavioral health services and I believe that all persons in need should be afforded behavioral health treatment, and thus I have been advocating for treatment to be available to incarcerated individuals since the organization I work at and am co-owner of, Agassiz Associates, PLLC, (Agassiz) was approached to take up this endeavor with the support of Grand Forks Public Health in 2018. Agassiz is a multi-disciplinary behavioral health private practice that provides mental health treatment and assessments, substance abuse assessments, treatment, and opportunities for engagement with those contemplating treatment, and medication management of psychiatric conditions. We also have prepared presentations on topics such as suicide prevention in correctional centers and strategies for first responders to maintain and/or increase their resiliency. In 2021, Agassiz also began working with Walsh County Health District and the Walsh County Sheriff's Office to provide services in the Walsh County Correctional Center (WCCC). Karen Anderson was a Walsh County Commissioner at that time and championed our cause. Agassiz has been providing mental health services and SUD treatment in WCCC for the past three years and SUD treatment in the Grand Forks County Correctional Center from 2018 to March 2020 and then again when we were allowed back in the facility following the pandemic.

I am testifying in favor of HB1337.

Incarcerated individuals lose access to essential health benefits like Medicaid, Medicare, and private insurance provided through employers, leaving county jails to bear the cost of treatment. These services are often unaffordable for those who are incarcerated given lack of alternative funding; thus, many incarcerated individuals go without behavioral health care which increases the risk of repeat offenses. The SUD voucher is available to be used with incarcerated individuals who qualify, although it does not cover telehealth group sessions and there is no equivalent voucher for mental health therapy.

HB1337 would fill this funding gap, allowing county jails to offer life-changing treatment programs. In-jail treatment programs can be effective in: Reduced recidivism - treated inmates are less likely to be rearrested than untreated inmates; reduced relapse - inmates who receive treatment are less

likely to relapse; reduced depression – inmates who receive treatment have lower levels of depression; fewer disciplinary infractions – inmates who receive treatment have fewer disciplinary infractions keeping our correctional officers safer in their jobs; cost savings – in-jail treatment programs can save money; and improved public health – treating drug-involved offenders can improve public health and reduce criminal behavior.

Several studies demonstrate reduced rearrest and reconviction rates, longer time to rearrest, and fewer arrests during follow-up for those participating in in-jail behavioral health treatment. Successful treatment outcomes have been reported for jail programs that are as limited as 1.5–5 months in duration. Involvement in aftercare treatment services following release from jail has also been found to reduce criminal recidivism. Offenders released from jail are more likely to participate in aftercare treatment if they have previously been involved in a jail treatment program.

It is important to note that about 60% of people in prisons and jails have a substance use disorder. About 44% of people held in local jails have a history of mental illness (this rate is higher among woman than men in jail) and suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in local jails.

In my work as a psychologist, I've seen how untreated behavioral health issues can perpetuate the cycle of incarceration, family dysfunction and domestic violence. Untreated behavioral health diagnosis can pull families apart, negatively impact school systems, and stunts people from becoming productive citizens. Providing medically necessary therapy is critical to changing this pattern, as medication treatment alone has been shown to not have long-term efficacy.

I have personally witnessed several life transformations occur due to behavioral health interventions. We have worked hard to establish and maintain a therapeutic environment in the correctional centers we are providing treatment in. We connect not only with the inmates, but also with the correctional officers to work together to provide a collaborative and safe space for all those involved in the programs we have established. I'd like to share several select examples of the successes we have witnessed:

- With mental health treatment, one inmate's health improved so much that they no longer needed as much insulin, could work again because they were no longer having seizure like activity, started a regular exercise routine, made amends with their adult children and had support waiting for them upon their release.
- Several inmates have expressed no longer wanting to, "End it all."
- Another prior inmate was working in the community years after completion of treatment and when they happened to see our provider at their place of work, they took the time to thank the provider and announced to all who would listen in the vicinity that treatment saved their life.
- An inmate stayed in jail longer to complete treatment and commit to healthy and sober living.
- Finally, an inmate disclosed that he was extremely grateful for the WCCC program. He had been incarcerated before at the jail when this program was not available, and he expressed being very thankful that there were now resources available. He said that the therapists who treated him were genuine, and he could tell they, "Actually cared." He reported that this gave him hope.

Part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) working definition of recovery is **recovery emerges from hope**. SAMHSA states, "The belief that recovery is real provides the essential and motivating message of a better future—that people can and do

overcome the internal and external challenges, barriers, and obstacles that confront them. Hope is internalized and can be fostered by peers, families, providers, allies, and others. Hope is the catalyst of the recovery process.” Many incarcerated men and women have been through horrific life events and yet with treatment they express having hope. We have collected pre and post data at WCCC. **294** inmates have been in behavioral health treatment in the past 3 years and **100%** of the inmates who have participated in the services provided at WCCC and completed the post-treatment questionnaire have reported that their treatment has been beneficial for them. Several inmates who were not able to complete treatment in WCCC contacted Agassiz and completed their treatment upon release. Inmates have also participated in aftercare upon their release. Others who participated in treatment at GFCCC have done the same and some have entered drug court to complete a year of treatment through the drug court program. Outpatient treatment for this program is being provided at Agassiz. All inmates who participate in programming with Agassiz are given information to use upon their release and re-entry to communities. This information includes such things as service providers, community support groups and pertinent vocational information.

Additionally, I have personally supervised the majority of therapists who have provided these services through Agassiz. Working with the incarcerated population has allowed these new therapists to develop skills necessary for working with the underserved. All the therapists I have supervised report having more empathy for, and a better understanding of, the needs of these populations, and all have stated that they would consider working with the underserved in the future. In fact, one of the individuals I have recently supervised is returning to Grand Forks after completion of their pre-doctoral internship to continue their work with this population at Agassiz, even though they are not from the area.

I strongly urge the committee to support HB1337 and recommend its passage. This bill is a meaningful step toward improving outcomes for individuals and our communities and is in-line with Governor Armstrong’s agenda to best support incarcerated individuals as well as those experiencing substance use and mental health issues.

Additionally, Agassiz Associates, PLLC has a proven track record in providing these services. We have spent 100’s of hours creating guides and templates for the implementation of these services in both large and small county jails. Agassiz is willing to share the program and process we have developed with other agencies to make implementation in other facilities go smoothly. It would be possible for other agencies to have a model to begin with and fit it to their organization, thus providing services quickly and efficiently thus decreasing start-up costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please feel free to email me at hjensen@agassizassociates.com or call (701) 746-6336 (Work) (701) 610-1191(cell) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Heidi K. Jensen

LAKE REGION LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

Emergency Communications ❖ Correctional Facility ❖ Residential Re-Entry Center

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Devils Lake, ND 58301-3596

Website: lrlec.org

Tel: 701-662-0700
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January 21, 2025

To the North Dakota House of Representatives Human Service Committee:

This testimony is being sent to encourage the SUPPORT of HB 1337 that pertains to the funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment for individuals in jails. I have been a nurse in the jail setting since 2014. I began at Tri-County Community Corrections in Crookston, MN and have been full time in my current role at Lake Region Law Enforcement Center since June of 2023.

In December of 2023, LRLEC implemented the first ever substance use treatment for inmates in the state. This was done in collaboration with Evolutions Counseling and funded by the Substance Use voucher. To put into words how successful this program has been for our inmates is a difficult thing to do. We offer 9 hours/week of intensive outpatient therapy for inmates who are incarcerated. We have both male and female groups. The beautiful thing about the services being started in the jail setting is that the voucher stays active so when they are released there is a seamless transition to services outside of the jail setting (in Devils Lake they literally can go downtown and continue with Evolutions Counseling, the same provider they saw in the jail). An inmate can start treatment here and then continue on the outside day 1. This reduces the chance of relapse and also allows for continuity of care with Evolutions counseling.

There was a gentleman who was living in Roosevelt Park and wandering downtown. He would come in and out of jail for small crimes that all stemmed from his drinking. He was one of those inmates that I thought I would see for the rest of my career until his addiction ended up taking his life. This individual finally agreed to start treatment in the jail setting here and then, upon release, went to an intensive year+ faith-based treatment program. I have not seen him here since. Without the support, treatment, and continuity of care from Evolutions Counseling, I believe this inmate would continue to be in and out of our facility. This funding could lead to so many more stories of recovery.

Below is a picture of our men's group from a few months ago. They are pictured with some of our staff and Heather Gibbens from Evolutions Counseling. The inmates were featured in a story in the Devils Lake Journal (link included below picture). When they saw they were in the paper for something positive they were so proud. Some of the inmates had other group members sign their copy. One sent a copy to his family. It reminded them they were someone and that their recovery mattered. Inmates have also shared that having this opportunity in the jail setting and seeing jail staff be supportive has changed the overall dynamic of county jail from primarily disciplinary to restorative.

LAKE REGION LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

Emergency Communications ❖ Correctional Facility ❖ Residential Re-Entry Center

222 Walnut Street West
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People often ask how I like working in a jail. I give the same response all the time because it's TRUE. There are SO MANY nice people in jail. Most of them were drunk or high and did something dumb and illegal. Once they sober up, they are remorseful, kind and very often a result of something bad outside of their control that happened to them (trauma). Thank you for the funding to allow us to start this work and please support anything that can help us continue it.



[Evolution Counseling helps inmates with mental health and substance issues | Devil's Lake Daily Journal](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Foss, RN, BSN
Lake Region Law Enforcement Center

Testimony
To the
Human Services Committee
On
HB 1337

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Joelle Schmuck, and I am a registered nurse at Walsh County Health District since 2021. This role has included working as public health nurse as well as a correctional nurse at the Walsh County Correctional Center. I am here today to voice my strong support for House Bill 1337.

Throughout my time working as a correctional nurse, I have become very resourceful and creative in my nursing care at the Walsh County jail and trying to meet the behavioral health needs of the inmate population was no exception. Very early on in my correctional nursing journey it became evident that the available behavioral health resources were far and in between, and flat out inadequate to serve the growing needs I was seeing on a day-to-day basis. The reason for this was not because the Walsh County jail did not want to address these critical health needs, but rather it came down to funding and cost. Individuals in county jails lose access to Medicaid, Medicare, and Veterans Benefits due to the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion policy. They also often lose private health insurance coverage due to loss of employment. Because of this, county jails are unable to provide vital mental health and substance use disorder treatment which often leads further deterioration of health for the inmate and inability to successfully reintegrate into society, further perpetuating the cycle of recidivism.

First and for most, as a nurse, I am an advocate. Advocating for my patient's needs often meant calling and reaching out to community partners, clinics, treatment centers, and providers to try to meet these behavioral health needs. I was met with the same answer repeatedly, they have no insurance coverage. There is no way to bill for these services. Have them follow up after release. I felt as though I was hitting a brick wall everywhere I turned, and in my nursing opinion, following up after release was just not good enough. It wasn't a true answer, it was a missed opportunity. That is where our partnership with Agassiz Associates PLLC. came in.

After the Walsh County Commissioners invested in the comprehensive mental health and substance use disorder treatment programming offered by Agassiz Associates PLLC. in the beginning of 2022, there was a monumental shift that occurred. For the first time since working at the Walsh County jail, I could confidently look my patients in the eye and say "Yes, we can help you." Those words carried incredible weight because for many, it was the first time they felt someone was invested in their recovery and future.

Getting this program off the ground and running was surprisingly smooth. I witnessed how trust and hope was built from the ground up with every single person that entered the program, and soon the word spread, and we had more and more inmates sign up. We have had remarkable success with participation in this program even early on. For the first time for many, their mental health issues and substance use disorders were being addressed and treated. I had the privilege of getting a front

row seat to the transformation that many of these individuals went through while enrolled in the Agassiz program. Hope for a future was being cultivated whereas so many had only believed that they would spend their entire life in and out of jails and prisons. Now someone was telling them that did not have to be their future and gave them tools and resources to make it a reality.

I am a member of the North Dakota Correctional Health Care Association which is made up of correctional nurses across North Dakota. Through conversations with other correctional nurses in the state, one thing has become undoubtably clear: the need for funding to support behavioral health programs is urgent. Most facilities in North Dakota either lack comprehensive behavioral health services altogether or have programs that are limited. There have been many instances where inmates in the Agassiz program have transferred to another county jail and have had to stop their treatment due to that jail not offering services.

That's why HB 1337 is so important. It would give jails across North Dakota the opportunity to build and tailor programs like the one we've developed in Walsh County. This funding would remove barriers to behavioral health treatment, allowing us to address the root causes of so many issues and give people the tools they need to succeed.

The ripple effect of this funding would be incredible. We'd see healthier individuals, stronger families, and safer communities. We'd see fewer people stuck in the cycle of incarceration and more people on a path toward a better future.

Chairperson Ruby and members of this committee, I urge you to support HB 1337. This isn't just about funding behavioral health services—it's about giving people a real chance to heal and rebuild their lives. It's about showing that it's never too late for a second chance.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important bill. I'd be happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Joelle Schmuck, RN

I encourage you to support HB 1337. By voting yes on this bill you are supporting and advocating for a more humane system overall, one that is compassionate and just, rather than only punitive. Treating underlying mental health conditions will strengthen our communities and individuals for the future.

Thank you for your time and service,
Brenda Weiler

Dear Valued Committee Members,

My name is Kaci Sharp, and I am the WIC Director for Walsh County, Pembina County, and Langdon. I am writing for multiple reasons including: a concerned citizen, professional and advocate in support of HB 1337 to fund mental health and substance use disorder treatment in county jails.

Inmates lose private insurance and federal benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, or VA benefits due to incarceration, and the way our current system is set up is not sustainable for county jails, and it is not treating the root cause of why inmates are there in the first place. Currently, county jails must fund treatment, which is financially unsustainable. There is very limited mental health therapy and substance use disorder treatment which is a huge gap in our current service and a major disservice to our citizens. Unfortunately existing programs only address part of the problem.

Being in favor of HB1337 to fund mental health and substance use disorder treatment in county jails would make a difference in so many lives, and Walsh County has been proving this to be true. It reduces recidivism by addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, improves correctional officers' safety by developing inmates' positive coping skills, helps public safety by fostering healthier reintegration into society, saves taxpayer money by reducing repeat incarcerations, and it strengthens communities by aiding individuals to overcome addiction, rejoin the workforce, and rebuild many family connections. I see this first hand in my position at WIC how the lack of support for mental health and substance disorder treatment is detrimental to families.

You, as committee members, have the power to make the beneficial difference in lives, and this is an urgent call to action to please support HB1337. I will gladly provide additional information or answer any questions as needed.

Thank you for your time and consideration to support HB1337 to fund mental health and substance use disorder treatment in county jails, a much needed opportunity for people.

Sincerely,

Kaci Sharp, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Certified Lactation Counselor
WIC Director

Phone: #701-352-5139
Walsh County Health District
638 Cooper Ave. Suite 3
Grafton, ND 58237

Cheryl Harlow
107 Maple Street, Apt 203
Park River, ND 58270

1/21/2025

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment in County Jails

My name is Cheryl Harlow, and I live in Park River, ND. I am on the Walsh County Substance Abuse Coalition Committee through my current employer Northern Plains Railroad, Inc. and affiliated companies. I am also the DER/Designated Employer Representative since 2014 and manage all aspects of DOT and Not-Dot drug and alcohol program compliance, including refineries in ND, MN, WI and UT.

I am writing to demonstrate my strong support for HB1337.

My support for HB1337 associates personal accounts with the people in my life. The testimonies submitted explain why we need this bill passed, but we also must know who benefits. My family and your family. My friends and their families and your friends and your friends' families. My coworkers and my coworkers' families and your coworkers and your coworkers' families. My community and your community.

Our communities' benefit by having offenders go through comprehensive behavioral health programs funded by HB1337 to help allow reintegrating people back into society so they can find stable housing, employment and avoid returning to jail. It may be their *only* opportunity when circumstances have them living in survival mode and not functioning in healthy environments and relationships. Learning life coping skills reduces recidivism and saves more people from being victimized and lowers incarceration costs.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. If this bill is passed, we all benefit.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Harlow



Walsh County Sheriff's Office

Law Enforcement Center • 638 Cooper Ave., Grafton, ND 58237

Phone: (701) 352-2041 • Fax: (701) 352-3347

Ronald J. Jurgens
Sheriff

Richard A. Sherlock
Chief Deputy

Adam S. Trahan
Chief Correctional Officer

Adam S. Trahan
638 Cooper Avenue
Grafton, ND 58237
atrahan@nd.gov
701-352-2041
January 16, 2025

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment in County Jails.

My name is Captain Adam S. Trahan, Chief Corrections Officer for Walsh County Sheriff's Office. I am responsible for the day to day operations of the Walsh County Correctional Center. I am writing this to express my strong support for HB1337. Some of you maybe unaware that when individuals become incarcerated they lose access to Medicaid, Medicare, Veterans Benefits and, in most cases, private insurance. As a correctional center we are unable to use federal funding to provide mental health and substance use treatment programs. These services are all too often unaffordable, this leaves many incarcerated individuals to go without care which can lead to a high risk of recidivism.

Walsh County Correctional Center has operated a program that provides mental health and substance use disorder treatment for three years through a partnership with Agassiz Associates LLC. and the Walsh County Health District. This program was solely funded by the Walsh County Commissioners using their ARPA funds. This funding has now ended. If HB1337 is passed, it would allow us to continue to operate a comprehensive mental health and substance use disorder treatment program at the Walsh County Correctional Center as well as allow other correctional facilities across ND to start a program of their own. HB1337 would fill this funding gap, allowing our county correctional facilities to offer treatment that they would not be afforded without these funds. These services can promote recovery, reduce recidivism, and provide a benefit to public safety, our community and their families wellbeing. In the year 2023, it cost around eight-four thousand dollars (84K) in the State of North Dakota to house one incarcerated individual for a year. That is roughly two hundred thirty dollars and thirteen cents (\$230.13) a day. With HB1337 and proper treatment we could help reduce this cost and help with the overcrowding that the North Dakota Correctional System is experiencing.

I have worked in the correctional field since 2001. I have personally seen when individuals are unable to get treatment for mental health and substance use disorder which can have an impact on the community and their families. I had a cousin that was a heavy drug user and became incarcerated for distribution of narcotics. He spent two years in a correctional facility and on the day of his release, he decided to partake in the same drugs he used before he was incarcerated. That night he died of a drug

overdose, at the age of twenty-nine years old (29). While working here at Walsh County Correctional Center, I noticed an individual that reminded me of him. He was able to take part in the services we offered through Agassiz Associates LLC. and the Walsh County Health District. I could see a change in him from the beginning of the program till he left. He asked the judge when she was giving him his sentence if he could stay at Walsh County Correctional Center an extra couple of weeks to finish his program. I believe if this program was around when my cousin was incarcerated he would still be here today. I have seen the individual that was incarcerated in the facility out in the community. He is working, staying out of trouble and spending time with his children.

I want to strongly urge the committee to support HB1337 and recommend its passage. Let North Dakota show the rest of the country that we are dedicated to helping our residents of this state. This bill is an essential step toward improving outcomes for individuals, our communities and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at atraham@nd.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Adam S. Trahan

Jana Theisen
5390 Mac Drive
Grand Forks, ND 58201
jtheisen@agassizassociates.com
701-331-9750

01/21/2025

Chairperson Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee,

Re: Support for HB1337 – Funding Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment in County Jails

My name is Jana Theisen and I am a resident of Grand Forks, North Dakota. I am a Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor and Licensed Master Social Worker through the state of North Dakota and have served Fargo, Grand Forks, and surrounding rural areas since 2009. I am writing to express my support for HB 1337. I work as an Addiction Counselor at Agassiz Associates, PLLC in Grand Forks and since 2018 our agency has worked determinedly with staff from Grand Forks Public Health and the Grand Forks County Correctional Center to provide essential behavioral health services to individuals who are incarcerated. In 2021, Walsh County Health District, Walsh County Sheriff's Office and the Walsh County Correctional Center sought out these vital services for inmates in their county jail as well. I am proud to have been a part of establishing these programs by completing substance use disorder assessments, individual sessions, and group sessions to inmates at both correctional centers. Each day, we watch these programs continue and grow and see the benefits.

Upon incarceration, individuals lose access to essential health benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, Veteran Benefits, and in most cases private insurance due to loss of employment. This leaves our jails unable to provide critical mental health and substance use disorder treatment. Without these funds and access to services, the risk for release and reincarceration is great and results in a revolving door in the jail instead of the rehabilitation these individuals need.

HB 1337 would fill this funding gap, allowing providers to continue to serve individuals while incarcerated and improve rates of recovery, public safety, community health and reduce recidivism. The Substance Use Disorder Voucher through the Behavioral Health Division has been beneficial but there are many challenges inmates face while attempting to access the voucher and the inability to provide group telehealth programming limits beneficial services. In addition, there is no such voucher available for mental health treatment, which plays a critical role in recovery from addiction as rates for dual diagnosis (mental health and substance use disorders both being diagnosed in an individual) are around 56%.

In my work as an Addiction Counselor, I see how incarceration and a lack of access to services can perpetuate a cycle of incarceration by exacerbating trauma and mental health concerns. Often, individuals with dual disorders "self-medicate" by using substances and are incarcerated for their use or behaviors related to their addiction. Jails often have restrictions on medications approved for treatment of mental health and the therapy services will serve as a beneficial addition.

The work that I've done with inmates has allowed me to recommend services and, in some cases, assist in coordinating admission into residential treatment immediately upon release from incarceration. In addition, I've provided education on topics such as relapse prevention, coping skills, addiction and much more, and assist them with identifying resources and supports upon release. Many inmates express concern regarding release, for example being released around 5:00AM, sometimes on a weekend when there are limited agencies available to provide support. Offering services to incarcerated individuals inside the jail allows for safety and relapse prevention planning as well allows providers to establish relationships so there is greater likelihood of continued care and follow-up upon release.

I strongly urge the committee to support HB 1337 and recommend its passage. The bill is a meaningful step toward improving outcomes for individuals and communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact me at jtheisen@agassizassociates.com or (701) 331-9750 with additional questions.

Sincerely,

Jana Theisen

Chairman Ruby and members of the committee. My name is Ron Jurgens, and I am the Walsh County Sheriff. I strongly support of HB1337. For years, our county has struggled with the cost of the cycle of individuals being arrested, released, and then being rearrested. This challenge burdens law enforcement, judicial system, and taxpayers. But most importantly, it fails the individuals caught in this cycle and leaves the root causes of their incarceration unaddressed. One of the biggest gaps we've identified is access to mental health services for individuals in custody. The time spent in jail was often a time to warehouse the prisoner and keep them away from the outside world. The opportunity to intervene without the necessary resources was a lost opportunity to help our inmates instead of just warehousing them. In 2021, recognizing this need the Walsh County Health District and myself, along with the Walsh County Commission took a bold step. It was decided that the allocated funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support mental health services in our county jail. With these funds, a 3-year contract with a mental health provider who delivered behavioral health counseling and therapy to inmates during their time in custody.

Many individuals took advantage of the program, and we saw firsthand the difference that access to professional mental health care could make. For some this was their first opportunity to address the underlying issues that contributed to their incarceration, whether it be substance use disorders or untreated mental health issues. This program has shown great promise. The demand for these services far exceeds what our current resources can support. HB1337 represents a crucial step forward. By providing dedicated funding for mental health services in county jails, this legislation would allow counties like ours to expand access to critical care and build upon the success of programs like ours. Investing in mental health services within jails is not just a compassionate choice—it is a practical and cost-effective one. By addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, we can reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and help individuals regain stability in their lives. This is an investment in people, in communities, and in a more sustainable justice system. On behalf of the Walsh County Sheriff's Office and Walsh County Jail, I urge you to support HB1337. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chair Ruby and Members of the Committee,

I write you today in SUPPORT of HB1337, a bill to expand mental health services in correctional facilities. This bill was developed by Rep. Anderson after the successful implementation of substance use disorder voucher reimbursed services in the Walsh County Correctional Center, and their successful pilot to expand those services to include mental health services via ARPA dollars. This bill capitalizes on a rare opportunity - private providers who are ready and eager to not just provide services, but to establish therapeutic environments in correctional facilities.

This program would enable correctional facilities across the state to invite private providers in to establish therapeutic relationships that can transfer beyond the facility. Establishing treatment early can better empower judges to make dispositions based on an individual's demonstrated progress and their ability to return to the community to continue services.

Over the past few legislative sessions, mental health and our prison capacity have been top priorities. Absent continuing efforts to reduce the unmet needs of people living with mental illness we run risk of increasing state expense to build and operate more prison beds. Bringing more private providers into the mix is a way we can continue to stretch our efforts to meet the need.

The need is well defined, since deinstitutionalization in the 1970s and 80s, a significant population of people living with mental illness are able to successfully live their lives outside of institutions, preserving their rights and reducing costs to the State. Unfortunately,

a smaller population of people living with mental illness have struggled to live successfully in the community and oftentimes end up in correctional facilities due to a lack of supports. Traditionally, county correctional facilities have been not a place of rehabilitation, but of detention, which can set individuals with mental illness back in their treatment and recovery efforts.

The Human Service Centers (HSC) have made progress in providing services in correctional facilities, with some HSCs sending providers to facilities or filling immediate needs via telehealth. Still, HSCs are challenged by staffing, resources, and geography. HSCs remain vital, but they cannot be the only solution to providing services in the correctional setting.

Thank you,

Michael Dulitz
Casselton, ND

Senator Tim Mathern
Senate District 11
Testimony for HB 1337

I am a senator from Fargo, and I have been in providing behavioral health services for 50 years... I hold master's in social work license.

Often persons with mental illness or a substance use disorder have difficulty to take part in treatment due to work and family time responsibilities.

This bill takes advantage of the prison or jail time to get the needed treatment. Without treatment the person will likely be back in jail within a year of serving the present incarceration.

I encourage a yes vote on HB 1337.



Telepsych Services - Jails

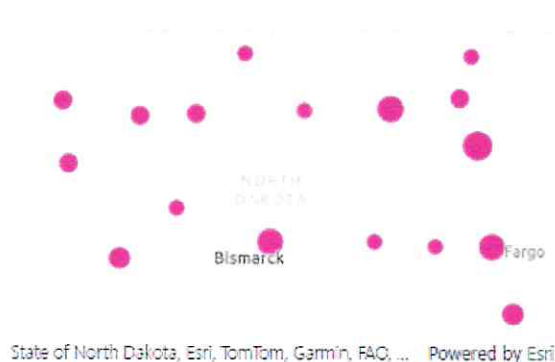
North Dakota

January, 2024 - December, 2024

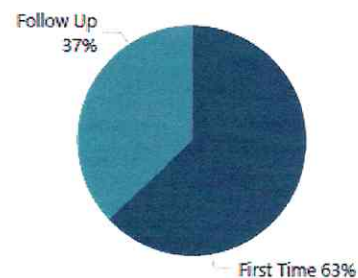
66
Avg Appts a Month

791
of Appts

44
Average Age



% of Appointments by Type



| Custom | Jan-24 | Feb-24 | Mar-24 | Apr-24 | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 | Nov-24 | Dec-24 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Barnes County Jail | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bottineau County Jail | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Burleigh Morton Detention Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 16 | 14 | 22 | 20 | 7 | 20 |
| Cass County Jail | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 13 | 18 | 11 | 19 |
| Grand Forks County Correctional Center | 0 | 0 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 10 | 31 | 29 | 45 |
| Heart Of America Correctional Center | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Lake Region Correctional Center | 0 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 15 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 3 | 2 |
| McKenzie County Correctional Facility | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| Mercer County Jail | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mountrail County Correctional Center | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Pembina County Jail | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Richland County Jail | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 14 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 8 |
| Stutsman County Correction Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The Southwest Multi-County Correction Center | 12 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 6 |
| Walsh County Jail | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Ward County Jail | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| Williams County Correctional Center | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 7 |
| Total | 23 | 19 | 27 | 46 | 46 | 65 | 65 | 80 | 89 | 118 | 81 | 132 |

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1337
1/28/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for grants to counties for mental health services for incarcerated individuals; and to provide for a report.

10:09 a.m. Chairman M. Ruby opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Ruby, Vice-Chairman Frelich, Representatives Anderson, Beltz, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Rios, Rohr

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

10:19 a.m. Representative Beltz moved a Do Pass.

10:19 a.m. Representative Beltz retracted motion.

10:20 a.m. Representative Fegley moved to adopt amendment LC# 25.0877.01001.

10:20 a.m. Representative Holle seconded the motion.

10:20 a.m. Voice vote - Motion passed.

10:20 a.m Representative Beltz moved a Do Pass as Amended and re-refer to appropriations.

10:21 a.m. Representative Hendrix seconded the motion.

| Representatives | Vote |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Representative Matthew Ruby | Y |
| Representative Kathy Frelich | Y |
| Representative Karen Anderson | Y |
| Representative Mike Beltz | Y |
| Representative Macy Bolinske | Y |
| Representative Jayme Davis | Y |
| Representative Gretchen Dobervich | Y |
| Representative Cleyton Fegley | Y |
| Representative Jared Hendrix | Y |
| Representative Dawson Holle | Y |
| Representative Dwight Kiefert | Y |
| Representative Nico Rios | Y |
| Representative Karen Rohr | y |

10:29 a.m. Motion passed 13-0-0.

House Human Services Committee

HB 1337

1/28/2025

Page 2

Representative Holle will carry the bill.

10:29 a.m. Chairman M. Ruby closed the meeting.

Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk

January 28, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1337

Introduced by

Representatives K. Anderson, Frelich, Hagert, Mitskog, Monson, Osowski, Wagner,
Schreiber-Beck, Satrom

Senator Mathern

1-28-25
1 of 1

1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services
2 ~~for grants to counties~~ for mental health services for incarcerated individuals; and to provide for a
3 report.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION. - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES -**
6 **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT-GRANTS -**
7 **REPORT.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not
8 otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$10,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary,
9 to the department of health and human services, for the purpose of providing ~~grants to counties~~
10 ~~for~~ mental health and substance use disorder treatment services for incarcerated individuals, for
11 the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. ~~Each~~ The department of health
12 and human services may distribute funding for grants to counties, and each county receiving a
13 grant shall report to the department of health and human services annually regarding funds
14 expended, services provided, individuals served, outcomes, and challenges. The department of
15 health and human services or its authorized agent may contract with private entities for mental
16 health and substance use disorder treatment services for incarcerated individuals. The
17 department of health and human services shall report to the legislative management by
18 September 2026 regarding a summary of the contracted treatment serves and county reports
19 and any recommendations for future funding and ~~grant~~ program changes.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1337**

Human Services Committee (Rep. M. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0877.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1337 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

2025 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

HB 1337

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

HB 1337
2/17/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of health and human services for mental health services for incarcerated individuals; and to provide for a report.

10:07 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Vigesaa, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Members Absent: Vice Chairman Kempenich, Representatives Brandenburg, Sanford

Discussion Topics:

- Mental Health
- Mental Health Services in North Dakota
- Health and Human Services

10:07 a.m. Representative M. Ruby introduced the Bill.

10:16 a.m. Pam Sagness, DHS Executive Director of Behavioral Health, answered questions.

10:36 a.m. Representative Nelson moved a Do Not Pass.

10:36 a.m. Representative Nathe seconded.

10:36 a.m. Roll Call Vote

| Representatives | Vote |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Representative Don Vigesaa | Y |
| Representative Keith Kempenich | A |
| Representative Bert Anderson | Y |
| Representative Mike Berg | Y |
| Representative Glen Bosch | Y |
| Representative Mike Brandenburg | A |
| Representative Jay Fisher | Y |
| Representative Karla Rose Hanson | Y |
| Representative Scott Louser | Y |
| Representative Bob Martinson | Y |
| Representative Lisa Meier | Y |
| Representative Alisa Mitskog | Y |
| Representative David Monson | Y |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Representative Eric J. Murphy | Y |
| Representative Mike Nathe | Y |
| Representative Jon O. Nelson | Y |
| Representative Emily O'Brien | Y |
| Representative Brandy L. Pyle | Y |
| Representative David Richter | Y |
| Representative Mark Sanford | A |
| Representative Gregory Stemen | Y |
| Representative Steve Swiontek | Y |
| Representative Scott Wagner | Y |

10:37 a.m. Motion Passed 20-0-3.

10:37 a.m. Representative O'Brien will carry the Bill.

10:37 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

Sierra Schartz, Committee Clerk

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED HB 1337 ([25.0877.02000](#))**

Appropriations Committee (Rep. Vigesaa, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (20 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 3 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1337 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.