

Human Services Interim Committee Hearing 29 October 2013
Testimony of Mike Reitan, Assistant Chief, West Fargo Police Department

Good Morning members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Mike Reitan and I am the Assistant Chief of the West Fargo Police Department. I wish to provide some insight into the frequency of my department's involvement with individuals suffering mental health or chemical dependency issues.

Officers of the West Fargo Police Department generate a written report for an incident which will result in information being shared with another agency or department. The other agencies or department may be prosecutors, the Department of Human Services, law enforcement agencies or other support service providers. Many more contacts with the public remain within the department and do not generate a written report.

In preparation of the Interim Study, I asked for and reviewed written reports prepared by officers of the West Fargo Police Department relating to incidents involving mental health and vulnerable adults. For the period of 22 February 2013 to 18 October 2013, sixty-five reports were prepared, an average of one written report every four days. Twenty-four reports involved a person believed to be a vulnerable adult. Forty-eight reports involved a subject displaying symptoms of a mental health issue. Forty-nine of the sixty-five interactions with officers resulted in the person being admitted to a hospital. Officers referred a report to Social Services for follow-up investigation on fifty-five of the cases.

The decision to prepare a report is based on the officer's evaluation of the conditions present and person's state of mind as well as whether the person appears to be a threat to themselves or to others. The chart represents only those cases where the officer felt compelled to complete a report and not those contacts that were less serious in nature. Frequently, the material I reviewed indicated the officers had been to a residence several times on related issues before a report was written.

West Fargo's current population is roughly 28,000. In comparison, North Dakota had slightly under 700,000 people in 2012. If we were to use the West Fargo average of ninety-one reportable cases per year as the example we could project the number of cases per year across North Dakota as being 2,100 reportable cases. This number would represent just those cases investigated and reported by law enforcement.

Mental illness and chemical dependency are frequently viewed as private family matters. Law enforcement is asked to intervene as an option of last resort when services are unavailable or have been ineffective. I truly believe the issue of mental illness and chemical dependency is under reported by the public and the level of available service in North Dakota is inadequate as evidenced in the requests for law enforcement assistance. I am encouraged by the work of this committee in addressing the shortfalls in available services. I thank you for your time and would make myself available for any questions you may have.

Age	Juvenile	vulnerable	mental health	Day	Time	date		medical	social services
15	1		1	Fri	5:49 PM	22-Feb-13	jumped from height	1	1
60		1	1	Wed	4:27 PM	27-Mar-13	mental health	1	1
24			1	Mon	10:57 AM	14-Oct-13	Suicide threats	1	1
64		1		Tue	4:30 PM	9-Apr-13	fall	1	1
68		1	1	Fri	1:41 PM	5-Jul-13	mental health		1
18			1	Mon	3:26 PM	1-Apr-13	Suicide threats	1	1
73		1		Sat	10:26 AM	5-Oct-13	Falls not taking Rx	1	1
22			1	Fri	5:30 AM	18-Oct-13	overdose	1	1
38			1	Sun	12:37 PM	11-Aug-13	overdose	1	1
50		1	1	Tue	10:01 PM	30-Apr-13	mental health	1	1
50			1	Fri	8:41 PM	19 Apr 13	mental health	1	1
31		1	1	Mon	10:59 PM	26-Aug-13	mental health	1	1
19			1	Mon	5:15 PM	8-Jul-13	mental health	1	1
29			1	Sun	5:32 PM	31-Mar-13	Suicide threats	1	1
18		1		Sat	8:47 PM	23-Feb-13	financial		1
38			1	Fri	10:21 PM	12-Apr-13	overdose	1	1
79		1	1	Fri	12:14 AM	6-Sep-13	dementia		1
16	1		1	Tue	4:18 PM	19-Mar-13	overdose	1	1
33			1	Fri	4:08 PM	1-Mar-13	Suicide threats		1
56		1		Thu	2:25 PM	29-Aug-13	alcohol	1	1
56		1		Sun	1:10 PM	14-Jul-13	alcohol		1
21			1	Sat	8:33 PM	29-Jun-13	overdose	1	1
37			1	Sun	8:00 PM	31-Mar-13	Suicide threats	1	1
69		1	1	Wed	11:52 AM	17-Apr-13	mental health	1	1
21			1	Tues	12:20 AM	11-Jun-13	Suicide threats	1	1
35			1	Fri	5:58 PM	5-Apr-13	overdose cutting	1	1
22			1	Mon	12:36 AM	24-Jun-13	Suicide threats	1	1
55			1	Sat	8:49 PM	16-Mar-13	cutting	1	1
21			1	Fri	9:53 PM	27-Sep-13	Suicide threats	1	1
70		1		Fri	3:59 PM	21-May-13	financial		1
70		1		Fri	3:59 PM	21-Jun-13	financial		1
49			1	Wed	3:15 AM	12-Jun-13	overdose	1	1
16	1		1	Fri	10:01 PM	20-Sep-13	Suicide threats	1	

same person
multiple calls

same person
multiple calls

Age	Juvenile	vulnerable	mental health	Day	Time	date		medical	social services
10	1		1	Tue	4:19 PM	16-Apr-13	Suicide threats	1	1
31		1		Sat	10:25 PM	5-Oct-13	overdose	1	1
54			1	Thu	11:56 AM	10-Oct-13	overdose	1	
17	1		1	Fri	1:32 AM	11-Oct-13	Suicide threats	1	
26		1	1	Fri	1:50 AM	29-Mar-13	mental health	1	1
41			1	Tue	12:09 PM	24-Sep-13	Suicide threats		1
31			1	Fri	11:09 PM	8-Mar-13	Suicide threats	1	1
16	1		1	Tue	12:07 PM	19-Mar-13	overdose	1	
51			1	Sun	10:02 PM	22-Sep-13	overdose	1	
19			1	Sun	8:27 PM	21-Apr-13	cutting	1	1
15	1		1	Tue	10:37 PM	24-Sep-13	overdose	1	1
33			1	Sun	10:23 PM	1-Sep-13	overdose	1	1
13	1		1	Tue	11:28 PM	4-Jun-13	Suicide threats		1
17	1		1	Fri	8:48 PM	6-Sep-13	Suicide threats	1	
18			1	Sun	2:34 PM	8-Sep-13	cutting/ gun	1	1
18			1	Thu	10:06 PM	29-Aug-13	threats	1	1
17	1		1	Mon	7:20 PM	29-Jul-13	overdose	1	1
21			1	Sat	11:20 PM	18-May-13	cutting	1	1
33			1	Fri	1:50 AM	27-Sep-13	cutting	1	1
82		1		Sat	11:25 AM	28-Sep-13	fall	1	1
19		1		Fri	4:48 PM	5-Apr-13	financial		1
19		1		Fri	12:00 PM	8-Apr-13	financial		
19		1		Fri	4:48 PM	23-Mar-13	financial		
48			1	Wed	7:17 AM	14-Aug-13	mental health	1	
56			1	Mon	4:11 PM	15-Jul-13	Suicide threats	1	1
45			1	Thu	12:16 PM	18-Apr-13	cutting		
68		1		Fri	3:21 PM	18-Oct-13	fall		1
68		1		Wed	8:35 AM	29-May-13	fall		1
67		1		Sat	7:34 AM	6-Apr-13	fall	1	1
60			1	Sat	9:15 PM	20-Apr-13	overdose	1	1
82		1		Sun	6:20 PM	4-Aug-13	fall		1
67		1		Wed	7:21 AM	3-Apr-13	fall	1	1

same person
multiple calls

same person
multiple calls

same person
multiple calls

Totals 10 24 48 49 55