

Testimony

Human Services Committee

Representative Chuck Damschen, Chairman

October 8, 2014

Chairman Damschen, members of the Human Services Committee, I am Dave Marion, today I speak representing the **Coalition of Residential Providers** (Psychiatric Residential Treatment Centers and Residential Child Care Facilities). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding Behavior Health.

Bullet One: Oversight System and Reciprocity Language

- a) We recommend modifying the “establishment of an oversight system” goal to expanding existing boards by including more diverse and more representative memberships (i.e. representatives from residential facilities and consumers, reflecting urban and rural demographics). We do not support adding a duplicate layer of oversight.
- b) We support the reciprocity language to include “shall” accept all professional licenses meeting national/international accreditation standards and qualified state equivalent for each Behavior Health License.

Bullet Two: Definition of Mental Health Professional (as it relates to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities *PRTF*)

We support the language of the bill drafted in August 2014 prepared by the Legislative Council Staff (#15.0232.01000), with one modification. Our support would be to exclude number 2 in the bill draft. Our intent is to exclude associate and bachelor level degrees in all fields.

Bullet Three: Adult and Youth Substance Abuse Telemedicine and Mental Health First Aid Training

We support increased appropriations for substance abuse services, e-psychiatry technology, telemedicine, and mental health first aid training for law enforcement.

Bullet Four: Mental Health Assessment Network

- a) We support the pilot project to develop discharge planning protocol.
- b) We support mental health first aid training for teachers.

Bullet Five: Mental Health Professional Loan Repayment Assistance Program

- a) We support repayment assistance programs for licensed addiction counselors.
- b) We would expand the group of professionals to include all Medicaid mental health reimbursable professionals.
- c) We would expand the definition to include an agreement, by the mental health professional receiving loan repayment, to maintain North Dakota employment in a mental health field for a stated period of time.

In conclusion, we offer, as a Coalition, to serve as members of committees, discussion groups, and/or stakeholder meetings to assist in improving the outcomes in behavioral health for youth in our state.

I would be happy to answer any questions of this committee.