

**Testimony**  
**House Bill 1380 - Department of Human Services**  
**House Appropriations**  
**Representative Jeff Delzer, Chairman**

February 2, 2021

Chairman Delzer and members of the Appropriations Committee, I am Pamela Sagness Behavioral Health Division Director for the Department of Human Services (Department). I appear today to provide neutral testimony regarding House Bill 1380, specifically section 7.

North Dakota's behavioral health system has been in a state of transformation for several years, starting in 2014 with the Schulte Report identifying that the state's behavioral health system was in "crisis". By 2018 the North Dakota Behavioral Health System Study identified key areas requiring action in order to address the system challenges.

There are three keys to reforming North Dakota's behavioral health system:

- Supporting the full Continuum of Care (Prevention to Recovery)
- Increase Community-Based Services
- Prevent Criminal Justice Involvement

House Bill 1380 Section 7 addresses these key areas and ensures investment in behavioral health is comprehensive and aligned to the work underway in the state.

Specifically, the bill identifies:

- programs to **prevent** behavioral health issues
- programs to improve **access** to behavior health services
- **infrastructure** to support behavioral health services and programs
- programs to support behavioral health **recovery** in the community

Although positive change is underway and the state is making strides in addressing behavioral health needs, there is much left to accomplish and unfortunately the pandemic has only compounded these needs.

This concludes my testimony and I am available to answer any questions.