

**Budget Committee on Human Services
Human Service Center Study
Representative Dever, Chairman
May 31, 2006**

Chairman Dever and members of the Budget Committee on Human Services, I am Lynn Nelson, Regional Director of the South Central Human Service Center in Jamestown and the Lake Region Human Service Center in Devils Lake. I am here today to provide you with an overview of the South Central Human Service Center and the Lake Region Human Service Center.

The South Central Human Service Center provides a variety of services to residents of the following nine North Dakota counties: Foster, Wells, Griggs, Barnes, Stutsman, LaMoure, Dickey, McIntosh and Logan.

The presentations you will hear today will focus primarily on the Human Service Center reporting format developed by the Legislative Council.

Today, several staff from South Central Human Service Center and Lake Region Human Service Center will be providing testimony. Dr. Gail Pickett, Clinical Director at South Central Human Service Center, will address some unique challenges in Region VI. Mr. Mark Anderson, Regional Fiscal Manager at South Central Human Service Center, will be sharing budget data information with you. I will also be providing additional program information and data.

Region VI has no private inpatient mental health facility. Region VI relies heavily on the North Dakota State Hospital for emergency placements requiring inpatient treatment. The Human Service Center also has the only full time community-based psychiatrist in this region.

During the past year, we have seen increased utilization of the North Dakota State Hospital. The North Dakota State Hospital has been at capacity on several occasions. South Central Human Service Center staff are currently working with the Open Door Program in Valley City to move six individuals with serious mental illness into an existing independent living program operated by Open Door. Open Door has successfully provided programming for up to 12 individuals for several years. We are hopeful to expand the Open Door independent living project to 18 individuals during this biennium. Although six beds may not seem to be a large number, the additional bed space at the North Dakota State Hospital will certainly help the hospital.

This biennium the South Central Human Service Center has experienced increased difficulty recruiting Advanced Clinical Specialists and Licensed Addiction Counselors. Another concern at both South Central Human Service Center and Lake Region Human Service Center is we anticipate a combined total of at least nine staff retiring in the next biennium, and six of these staff are program directors.

Dr. Gail Pickett will now address some of the staffing concerns and also clinical trends affecting South Central Human Service Center.