

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4029

House Human Services Committee

Representative Price, Chairman

March 19, 2007

Chairman Price, members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Alex C. Schweitzer, Superintendent of the North Dakota State Hospital and Developmental Center of the Department of Human Services.

The Department of Human Services has no issue with a review of the appropriate use of facilities for the treatment of people with mental illness and chemical dependencies. The Department also supports the concept of community based services and treatment as close to home as possible. The Department's eight (8) regional Human Service Centers currently provide effective community based services for people with mental illness and chemical dependencies.

The resolution was amended in the Senate to address the concern of the Department of Human Services that a public inpatient hospital must exist. We also support the amendment to add people with chemical dependencies to the study, as the hospital serves both people with mental illness and chemical dependencies.

It is clear when speaking with the Directors of Human Service Centers, that they feel strongly that the system needs a public inpatient facility. Also, as you may or may not be aware, the State Hospital is the only inpatient psychiatric facility in the Jamestown and Devils Lake region.

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The State Hospital in 2006 served a traditional average daily population of 215 patients, which is only 13 patients, less than the average daily population served in 1997. 90 of these 215 patients were served in the Tompkins Rehabilitation Center, a program for the treatment of chemically addicted patients referred from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The State Hospital serves an additional 55 patients in the sex offender treatment program in the secure services unit.

The history of private psychiatric facilities in the State of North Dakota has been to serve the patient for their acute stage of illness and then transfer them to the State Hospital for long-term treatment and maintenance. Human Service Centers utilize the hospital when community based services are not an option. As such, the State Hospital is a necessary part of the continuum of care for people with mental illness and chemical dependencies.

The Department of Human Services believes it is vital that we long range plan the location, size and services of the North Dakota State Hospital and the appropriate utilization of its current facilities.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.