Chairman Wolf and members of the Commission on Alternatives to Incarceration, I am Pamela Sagness, Prevention Administrator with the Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services. I am here today to provide information on the substance abuse prevention coordinators and the North Dakota community readiness survey.

**North Dakota Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinators**
The Department funds twelve (12) Prevention Coordinator positions throughout the state of North Dakota. The Division contracts with the Rural Crime & Justice Center of Minot State University for eight (8) regional prevention coordinators, located in each of the 8 human service regions. There are also four (4) tribal prevention coordinators representing Standing Rock, Three Affiliated Tribes, Turtle Mountain, and Spirit Lake. These coordinators provide innovative, culturally appropriate, substance abuse prevention strategies to local communities. Prevention Coordinators offer resources and materials, education programs for youth, families, and communities, drug- and alcohol-free events, multi-agency collaboration, and information on environmental strategies.
The prevention coordinators are focusing on five (5) primary goal statements: (Attachment A)

- Low awareness of substance abuse issue in ND
- High level of underage drinking & binge drinking
- High level of adult binge drinking
- High level of inhalant use among middle school students
- High level of prescription drug use about youth & adults

**Prevention Coordinators and Safe Community Coordinators**

I would like to briefly discuss the difference between the Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinators and the Safe Community Coordinators. The Safe Community Coordinators are funded by the Department of Transportation. Safe Community coordinators promotes injury prevention activities at the local level working to solve local highway, traffic safety and other injury problems by involving its citizens in addressing injury problems through the development of coalitions. The Department of Human Services and Department of Transportation meet regularly and collaborate in order to avoid duplication of services. Coordinators at the local level work as community partners and utilize one another as a resource and referral source. Therefore, the Prevention coordinators focus on Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) prevention while Safe Community Coordinators focus on Injury Prevention, specifically related to highway and traffic safety.

**Community Readiness Survey**

Lastly, in 2008, the Division funded a statewide community readiness survey in order to gauge the readiness of North Dakota citizens, professionals, and communities to take action regarding substance
abuse issues. The results of the survey suggest a readiness level of 

denial/resistance – meaning, at least some community members 
recognize that there is a concern, but there is little recognition that it 
might be occurring locally or vague awareness – meaning that most 
feel that there is a local concern but there is no immediate motivation 
to do anything about it.

Knowing the level of readiness for the state of North Dakota allows the 
Division and prevention system partners to plan strategies that will be 
appropriate for the community’s needs. (Attachment B)

Thank you.