

Department of Human Services
Senate Human Services
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman

January 7, 2019

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Pamela Sagness, Director of the Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Human Services (DHS). I appear today in support of Senate Bill 2029.

Senate Bill 2029 looks to expand the Free Through Recovery program, as was also proposed in the Governor's Executive Budget request. The Free Through Recovery program was developed through a partnership between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) and is administered by the Behavioral Health Division of DHS. This program has brought recovery support services, including care coordination and peer support to individuals with an addiction, mental illness or both, who are also in the criminal justice system.

This program was developed to address the need for behavioral health community-based services and supports throughout the state. The Free Through Recovery program is reimbursed based on outcomes. Free Through Recovery providers are reimbursed a flat monthly rate. And, if participants achieve at least 3 of 4 outcomes (housing, employment, recovery, and reduced criminal justice involvement) there is an additional 20% performance enhancement pay. Overall, more than 900 individuals have participated in Free Through Recovery and from March – November 2018, 68% of participants achieved this measure of success.

Although Free Through Recovery has established new community-based services, these services are only available to individuals currently on probation, parole, or exiting incarceration. There are many more individuals that need access to these services. With expanded access, Free Through Recovery could reach moms and

dads involved with social services and at risk of being separated from their children, individuals with behavioral health conditions at risk of criminal justice involvement, and those frequenting the emergency departments, homeless shelters, and engaging with law enforcement officers because they don't have the support and coordination to access care or services that can result in stability and recovery.

Expansion of Free Through Recovery has the potential to address Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) goals #3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11,12, and 13.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.