

Testimony
Engrossed House Bill 1470 - Department of Human Services
Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Lee, Chairman
March 28, 2021

Chairman Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Rosalie Etherington, Superintendent of the North Dakota State Hospital (NDSH) and Chief Clinics Officer of the Human Service Centers, of the Department of Human Services (Department). I am here on behalf of the Department to provide testimony in support of House Bill 1470.

The Department supports studying the behavioral health needs, including access, availability, and delivery of services, of incarcerated adults.

The regional human service centers have set a prioritized goal to better serve our clients to prevent arrests. Through a set of targeted interventions our clients, over the last year, have experienced a 53% reduction in arrests.

We have also set a prioritized goal to better serve our clients when incarcerated. We provide psychiatric services to clients detained in Cass, Burleigh, Stark, Williams, and Barnes county jails.

Behavioral health needs of incarcerated adults is much greater than the individuals served through the human service centers. A study would identify current and potential service providers and what barriers exist to either continue, or expand, behavioral healthcare in jail settings.

Incarceration, without that continued care, results in rapid deterioration, and often hospitalization. We welcome opportunity, in partnership with county jails, to study access, availability, and delivery of services to incarcerated adults.

This concludes my testimony and I am happy to answer any questions. Thank you.