



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JESSE JAMES

Chairman Testin and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today on Senate Bill 405. I am extremely proud of Senator Kathy Bernier and her leadership on this bill. It has been an honor to be a part of something so important and beneficial for our entire state.

3,161: that is the number of emergency detentions in the State of Wisconsin in 2018.

774: that is the number of patients admitted to Winnebago in 2018.

20% of all patients admitted to Winnebago for a Chapter 51 came from 29 counties from northern, and western Wisconsin.

I want to introduce a partnership for all of Wisconsin, which will have a ripple effect through our communities, our law enforcement agencies, our counties, and our state. We have proposed a cost-effective, efficient solution to our growing mental health crisis which will provide relief now.

Currently, Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire has a bed count of 29 beds, 21 adult beds, and 8 adolescent beds. We are proposing an additional 22 bed expansion for a total of 51 beds. Sacred Heart Hospital will transition to a 31 adult only bed facility, and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls will remodel a portion of their hospital into an 18 adolescent only bed facility.

In 2018 the 29 counties reflected in this bill spent approximately \$2.7 million going to and from Winnebago. I am proud to say we should see a return on investment from this bill in approximately six year. Agencies will see savings when it comes to paying law enforcement overtime, calling in additional staff for the trip, savings to our counties, keeping our patients closer to family and friends when they need them in times of crisis.

In my career as a law enforcement officer, just two years ago the big issue was not having officers to employ in our agencies. Today, it is the growing issue of mental health. Plain and simple mental health calls for service are on the rise. Our law enforcement officers, our agencies, and our counties spend a lot of money traveling to and from Winnebago, when we don't have the available facilities for our patients.

Winnebago charges counties approximately \$1,300/day, with an average stay of 9 days while Sacred Heart charges counties approximately \$600/day with average stay of 5 days. Start-up costs for a psychiatric bed is approximately \$1-\$1.3M which would equal \$22 million-\$28.6 million.

Sacred Heart can get this project done for approximately \$680,000/bed because they have existing infrastructure already in place. It will be \$14.96 million total.

We know Winnebago is busting at the seams and going through a workforce shortage. We know those working there are working significant overtime. Winnebago is the only facility in the state required to



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JESSE JAMES

accept anyone having a mental health crisis, while officials continue to address safety hazards and gaps in care.

Winnebago is still working on eliminating hazards in the facility that made it too easy for patients to attempt suicide. They are still working on addressing the staff shortages which were endangering patients. They still have staff vacancies, we funded 51 new positions, but these positions have not been filled. The budget which took effect in July called for 12 new psychiatric care supervisors to address staffing needs, none of these positions have been filled. Winnebago needs a break!

I have been asked, "How is this going to help my district?" If we add additional beds on the northwestern side of the state, it will reduce the number of patients going to Winnebago, which would benefit those in the southern, southeastern, and northeastern parts of the state because more beds would be available at Winnebago.

What does our bed situation look like in northwestern Wisconsin? There are 100 adult beds, and only 8 adolescent beds. Eight beds for our children, from Superior to LaCrosse, from Hudson to Wausau! This bill is about providing the necessary services and resources for our youth. Having an additional 18 beds for our adolescent population is huge. This population should be kept close to home, and not four hours away. This has to be about our Wisconsin children.

When a chapter 51-emergency detention is initiated, it is all about getting the necessary services, and providing resources to the patient, as well as the family in the case of our adolescent population. Sacred Heart does very well when it comes to emergency detentions. I have seen the four additional rooms they built off their emergency room area, and they are dedicated to providing the best services available. It is about the patient.

I applaud HSHS, President Bagnall, Toni Simionson, and all those who are fighting for our Wisconsin adult and adolescent mental health patients. This is a win-win for all of Wisconsin.

STATE SENATOR KATHY BERNIER
TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



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From: Senator Kathy Bernier
To: Committee on Health and Human Services
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 405
Relating to: grant to a hospital for expanding psychiatric bed capacity.
Date: February 12, 2020

Thank you Chairman Testin and committee members for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 405 today. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Rep. James on this important piece of legislation.

A mental health crisis is traumatic under any circumstances, but when the situation escalates to the point where a Chapter 51 emergency detention becomes necessary, the situation is often made worse by the need to transport individuals many hours away while restrained in the back of a squad car. The goal of this legislation is to reduce the time and stress of transporting emergency detention patients great distances from northern and western Wisconsin to Winnebago Mental Health Institute in Oshkosh by instead increasing the number of beds available regionally.

This bill won't solve Wisconsin's mental health crisis alone, but it will help those in crisis by keeping them closer to supporting family and friends, save county and local government resources and potentially serve as a model for similar efforts elsewhere in the state. Initial savings are estimated at \$2.7 million annually and could be much higher.

Senate Bill 405 create a one-time \$15 million grant from the Building Commission for the startup costs of renovating existing facilities and training new staff to add 22 new mental health beds at an Eau Claire area hospital. Ongoing expenses would be absorbed by the hospital. The new and currently existing beds would be split between a 33 adult bed location and a dedicated 18 bed adolescent location nearby. That approaches the number of adolescent beds currently available at Winnebago MHI. This expansion would dramatically help with the difficulties of transporting individuals under Chapter 51 emergency detention to Winnebago MHI for 29 counties in northern and western Wisconsin. Traveling the 300 plus miles from northwest Wisconsin to Oshkosh can take over five hours each way.

In 2018, these 29 counties accounted for 774, or roughly twenty percent, of the individual admissions received at Winnebago MHI. By serving the vast majority of individuals from these counties closer to home and dramatically reducing this number, the current strain on Winnebago could be reduced as well.

I ask you to please consider the passage of Senate Bill 405. Thank you again for allowing me to submit testimony today.

**Dunn County Department
of Human Services
& ADRC**



**3001 US Highway 12 East, Suite 160
Menomonie, WI 54751-5569**

**(715) 232-1116; FAX: 232-5987
ADRC: (715) 232-4006**

February 12, 2020

RE: Mental Health Bed Space

The Western Region of Wisconsin is comprised of 18 counties spread out between Superior and LaCrosse. Over the past several years, the region has seen a decrease in the availability of emergency mental health beds in the area and a corresponding increase in the numbers of persons needing to be transported across the state to the Winnebago Mental Health Institute for emergency detention.

Wisconsin counties have invested significant time and resource into developing community-community based crisis mental health and diversion services and as a result, the number of emergency detentions in western region counties has not increased but remained steady for a number of years. Meanwhile, between 2013 and 2019, the number of persons detained annually at Winnebago from the western region increased by 200%, from 96 to 295. Significantly, so did the related costs paid by counties.

As county human services directors, we are very concerned about the diminished availability of mental health bed space in Western Wisconsin. Consider for a moment a person, or perhaps even your child, experiencing a mental health crisis and needing to be transported five hours in the back of a squad car in hand cuffs from Superior to Winnebago. Keep in mind that this occurs after the person has waited through an assessment and medical clearance taking several hours. Now consider law enforcement, which may already be understaffed, sending two officers to transport one person five hours one way plus processing time. The impact of lack of bed space on county operations is significant but the human toll is devastating.

Three years ago, the county human service directors began to gather data to quantify the issues resulting from lack of mental health bed space and to inform key decision makers on the need for change. Senator Kathy Bernier was successful in introducing legislation into the 2019-2021 biennial budget to provide \$15 million of funding the Hospital Sisters Health System develop 32 additional psychiatric beds in Eau Claire/Chippewa. Unfortunately, the funding did not make it through the budget process.

The Western Region Department of Human Services directors request that funding for the development of local inpatient psychiatric hospital beds be reconsidered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the legislature and Governor Evers. We understand that increased bed capacity is not the only answer to the burgeoning mental health needs across our state. However, it is one means of treating persons in a mental health crisis more humanely by providing a shorter commute to an appropriate treatment facility. The development of local resources would also lessen the burden on an already taxed law enforcement system.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Korpela". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kristin Korpela, on behalf of the Western Region Human Services Directors



Sheriff Kevin Bygd
Chief Deputy Marshall Multhauf

Dunn County Sheriff's Office

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February 5, 2020

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill.

The need for more local psychiatric beds has been a problem that has been ongoing for many years and has seen much attention in the past couple years. We have still not seen any practical solutions come to fruition.

Mental health issues are increasing not decreasing. This problem will not go away and needs to be addressed soon.

I had a staff member attend the Attorney General's Summit on Emergency Detention on October 31, 2019 in Madison. During the presentations and policy discussions a critical problem was identified and that is **Capacity**.

Because of the limited number of psychiatric beds around the State and specifically at our local hospitals, Sheriff's Offices and Police Departments from the northwest and west central regions of Wisconsin often only find placement available at the Winnebago Mental Health Institute. From Dunn County, the transport of a patient in crisis, to the Winnebago Mental Health facility is a 3 ½ hour trip one way. To accomplish such a lengthy transport two deputies are assigned which strains agency staffing and overtime budgets.

This not an occasional occurrence. Agencies from this side of the state frequently only find placement at the Winnebago facility which then also impacts bed availability for those agencies in the central, southern and eastern regions of Wisconsin.

Lack of capacity has a very significant impact on law enforcement agency staffing and our budgets, however, I want to emphasize that the larger problem in this issue, that can't be lost, is the delay in evaluation and treatment for those individuals who are taken into custody that are currently suffering a mental health crisis.

Please give due consideration to this matter. Just think of a family member or friend in need of emergency mental health evaluation and treatment, yet there are no available beds locally and treatment will be significantly delayed. Let alone the fact that they are taken to a hospital on the other side of the state so it's becomes a strain on the rest of the family just to take them clothes or visit them. Now how does that patient get back home once they have been released after being treated and stabilized?



Dunn County Sheriff's Office

*Sheriff Kevin Bygd
Chief Deputy Marshall Multhauf*

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Increased local capacity will greatly help address the issues faced by law enforcement agencies and people in need of services around the state.

It will also help to get more patients suffering an emergency mental health crisis the treatment they need with much less delay and be closer to home.

Thank you for your time and attention in addressing a very significant mental health problem that has impacts felt across the State of Wisconsin daily.

Respectfully,

Sheriff Kevin Bygd.



February 12, 2020

TO: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
RE: AB443/SB405

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing on behalf of the Wisconsin County Human Service Association (WCHSA) in support of this proposed bill.

WCHSA is a statewide association of county human services leaders whose mission is to engage administrators in policy, funding and administrative issues that support the development and maintenance of a public human services system. Through its Behavioral Health Policy Advisory Committee, WCHSA works to identify and address critical behavioral health system issues in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and other stakeholders. Addressing Wisconsin residents' emergency mental health needs is a top priority for WCHSA member agencies.

When a Wisconsin resident experiences a mental health crisis, an essential intervention and stabilization resource is the availability of psychiatric beds in local hospitals. Emergency detention under Chapter 51, Wis. Stats., is an important option within the continuum of care for persons experiencing a mental health crisis and requires the availability of beds at appropriate treatment facilities. County human services directors are very concerned about the scarcity of mental health bed space in Wisconsin, particularly the Western Region. Over the past several years, the 18 counties in Wisconsin's Western Region have seen a decrease in the availability of emergency mental health beds in the area and a corresponding increase in the numbers of persons needing to be transported across the state to the Winnebago Mental Health Institute or other suitable facilities for emergency detention. This response to mental health crises is not only traumatic for the person in crisis, sitting in handcuffs for hours in a law enforcement vehicle, but also requires significant county staff time and financial resources, involving not only human services departments but also local law enforcement agencies.

Three years ago, the county human service directors began to gather data to quantify the issues resulting from lack of mental health bed space and to inform key decision makers on the need for change. Senator Kathy Bernier was successful in introducing legislation into the 2019-2021 biennial budget to provide \$15 million to the Hospital Sisters Health System to develop 32 additional psychiatric beds in Eau Claire/Chippewa. Unfortunately, the funding did not make it through the budget process.

WCHSA requests that funding for the development of local inpatient psychiatric hospital beds be reconsidered by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, the Wisconsin Legislature, and Governor Evers. We understand that increased bed capacity is not the only answer to the burgeoning mental health needs across our state. However, it is one means of treating persons in a mental health crisis more humanely by providing a shorter commute to an appropriate treatment facility. The development of local resources would also lessen the burden on an already taxed law enforcement system, as well as the Winnebago Mental Health Institute. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Ray Przybelski, President



Jason Spetz
Chief, UW-Stout Police Department

University of Wisconsin-Stout Police
817 S. Broadway Street #110
Menomonie, WI 54751-0790

715-232-5076 (direct line)
spetzj@uwstout.edu

February 12, 2020

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill because I know we can do better for our people in crisis while, at the same time, reduce the strain on public service agencies who are dealing with these incidents on a regular basis.

I lead a law enforcement agency that is in the challenging position of being a small law enforcement agency serving a community whose age group statistically represents a large percentage of mental health cases across the country. My agency's mental health case numbers have more than doubled as compared to five years ago. In recent cases, we have transported to Amery, Rhinelander and Winnebago in order to find a facility able and/or willing to accept our cases.

In general, these cases are time consuming and can greatly strain the resources of a small department. To illustrate this point, I only have to go back to January 23rd of this year. One of our officers responded to a person in crisis at 2:30am, on that date, that resulted in an emergency detention. The only option was to transport to Winnebago, bypassing two facilities in nearby Eau Claire. The case was completed approximately 18 hours later, at 9pm. Incidentally, this was the time that the officer was scheduled to start his next patrol shift. With our minimal resources, we had officers holding over, starting early and coming on days off, to cover regular operations. I'm sure you have heard numerous examples like this other agencies.

That said, I also urge you to not overlook the most important aspect in this matter, the person in crisis. Aside from the actual events leading them to their crisis, they find themselves dealing with law enforcement, crisis workers, hospital staff, and last, but certainly not least, a car ride across the state. At times I wonder if we are doing more harm than good for some of these people.

In conclusion, I ask that you keep this bill moving forward. Emphasis needs to be placed on doing everything we can to ensure that we have adequate facilities to better manage those with mental health needs, so that we can better serve the citizens of the State of Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Spetz".

Jason Spetz
Chief, UW-Stout Police Department



"In Partnership with Students, Staff and Visitors, we Serve and Protect UW-Stout's Diverse Community"

CHIPPEWA FALLS
POLICE
Integrity • Compassion • Commitment

February 5, 2020

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill addressing the critical shortage of hospital beds for our community members in crisis and in need of emergency detention.

I have spoken to many members of my community about this issue. As you are well aware, those in crisis are not criminals. However, due to the scarcity of hospital beds and the growing issue of mental health we are transporting patients for long distances in the back of a squad car. This is not a desirable situation for someone in need of mental health services, a condition already stigmatized by society.

This issue also affects our police officers. Most departments in Wisconsin are already struggling to keep their ranks filled. This has resulted in many hours of overtime just keeping the streets covered. Transporting an emergency detention patient across the state is a heavy added burden. An emergency detention requiring a transport to Winnebago can take well over 8 hours in total between handling the call, hospital clearance and transport time there and back.

The Chippewa Valley is already home to hospitals with experience in serving those requiring emergency detention. This initiative would significantly expand those resources in northwest Wisconsin and the benefits would be felt immediately. The added juvenile beds to this area would be especially welcome as this would allow their caregivers to be closer. Every patient served in Eau Claire is one more bed available in Winnebago or at other mental health hospitals.

I have served the Chippewa Falls community for over 20 years. The emergency detention situation is one that needs immediate attention.

Thank you for all that you do to improve our quality of life here in Wisconsin. Please contact me if I can be of any further help.

Sincerely,



Matthew Kelm
Police Chief
Chippewa Falls Police Department



402 Technology Drive E
Menomonie, WI 54751

February 10th, 2020

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill to ensure larger capacity for inpatient psychiatric hospital beds to serve residents of North, Northwestern, and Western Wisconsin.

Northwest Connections (NWC) is the largest emergency mental health crisis services provider in the state of Wisconsin in which we serve 27 counties. Of those, the following counties named in the bill are directly served by NWC, and certainly are negatively impacted by the lack of available psychiatric inpatient hospital beds: Barron, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix, and Trempealeau.

While inpatient psychiatric care is not the only answer to serving those with mental health crisis needs, it certainly is a viable, pertinent resource to save lives. The suicide rate per capita in Wisconsin is already higher than the national average and statistically suicide occur more frequently in rural areas. Inpatient care is a part of vital continuum of crisis and mental health services that all residents of Wisconsin should have the opportunity to easily access, not just those located near urban centers.

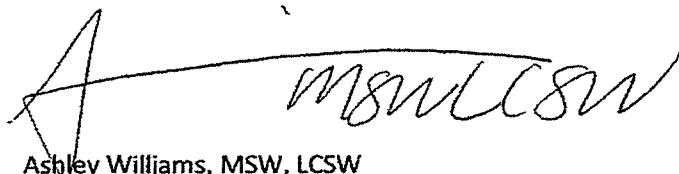
In our region, we have a geographic incentive to avoid utilization of Winnebago Mental Health Institute (WMHI) which is already over-utilized, and at times, at risk of underserving its numerous residents. If we were able to develop larger psychiatric bed capacity in our region of Wisconsin, the positive outcomes would be tremendous. First, services would more localized offering not only familiarity and direct connection to service providers, but person-centered planning and enhanced family involvement. We know that having a support system is the primary protective factor in crisis intervention work. Second, law enforcement would be able to protect and serve their communities with less time spent in transportation and medical clearance waiting times which pulls law enforcement from the street creating more opportunities for violent crime. Thirdly, this bill would reduce the negative impact on already strained county and law enforcement budgets allowing for greater allocation into community-

based programming and crisis diversion efforts. Fourthly, this initiative is beneficial for ALL communities in Wisconsin because it would create more bed availability in the Southern and Eastern parts of the state allowing for greater access to inpatient psychiatric care for ALL residents. Lastly, the advantages are mostly impactful for the individual in crisis who would be treated more effectively, efficiently, and with greater compassion allowing for more streamlined and quicker access to stabilization and treatment; ultimately reducing financial obligations for themselves and other community partners; while having deeper involvement from their natural supports and person-centered interventions.

Most importantly, having greater capacity to serve these primarily more rural communities, who already have a significant disparity in mental health services, would create opportunities to engage and intervene earlier on, developing better connection to mental health resources to save lives, time, and money. I certainly heard a wise man say, "We need to look for opportunities to say 'YES' versus citing our reasons to say 'no.'"

We are all in this together, so please ask yourselves, "Are you just working to stop people from dying? Or are you truly helping people to LIVE?"

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashley Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Ashley Williams, MSW, LCSW
Emergency Services Director
Northwest Connections
AshleyWi@nwgc.com
715.939.0436



PEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF Joel Wener

740 7th Avenue West
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Phone: 715-672-5944
Fax: 715-672-8753

CHIEF DEPUTY Matthew Roesler

February 7, 2020

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill with hopes of helping us in law enforcement better serve our citizens in times of behavioral health crisis.

I have spoken with both the former Attorney General and current Attorney General numerous times about the issues surrounding the need to help elevate the need to transport people with mental health needs four hours from Pepin County to Winnebago Mental Health Institute (WMHI), this is on top of waiting with them sometimes six to eight hours in a hospital emergency room trying to gain medical clearance for WMHI to decide if they will accept them.

The mental health system is truly broken, I have first hand witnessed and dealt with many mental health commitments in my career. Nothing is more frustrating as Sheriff, trying to get help for someone in crisis then having to wait with them in a hospital ER trying to find a behavioral health unit to accept them. I can tell you firsthand stories of behavioral health hospital units telling us that they would accept someone only to be told two or three hours later that they didn't pass the behavioral unit's medical clearance. Then to start all over again with another behavioral unit hospital and again wait possibly three to four more hours to gain medical clearance for the person at this behavioral health hospital unit. Imagine one of your loved ones crying out for help then having to sit six to eight hours in a hospital ER waiting to get the medical clearance, THEN being placed in the back of law enforcement caged squad car to be transported to WMHI for another four hours. I have had people beg me to just let them go back home and go to bed and promise me if I take them home, they won't harm themselves or anyone else.

People transported to WMHI from Pepin County also lack the support of any family network or sense of feeling close to family, I have also witnessed how family support can assist in the recovery of one's mental health, however being four hours away from home does not allow for family to visit or for support to easily occur.

The opening of more space within the West Central Wisconsin region hospitals for adults and juveniles will only help local law enforcement agencies better to serve their respective citizens with behavioral health needs better. It will also allow for officers from all law enforcement agencies to return back to their communities in a timely manner and continue to protect and serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheriff Joel D Wener
Pepin County Sheriff's Office

Pierce County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Nancy Hove
Chief Deputy Steve Albarado



Sheriff Department Phone: 715-273-5051
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Investigation Fax: 715-273-3409
Jai/Administration: 715-273-1137

555 West Overlook Drive • Ellsworth, WI 54011

February 5, 2020

To: Chairman Testin and other committee members

From: Sheriff Nancy Hove – Pierce County Sheriff

Re: Hearing AB443/SB405

Chairman Testin and other committee members,

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill.

Pierce County WI, as well as many other northwestern counties, is isolated from having psychiatric beds readily available in the time of a mental health crisis. Although there are considerable financial implications, our primary concern is with the individuals in need of psychiatric services. In the time of mental health crisis, transporting that fragile person from Ellsworth to Winnebago Mental Health Facility, 228 miles (4 + hours) one way is unacceptable. Although there are other psychiatric beds in the area, they are commonly at capacity and our only option is a long transport, which raises serious safety and security concerns, not to mention the tremendous expense.

Due to the duration of the transport (10-12 hours roundtrip), I require that a deputy be called-out. All of our call-out detail is paid at overtime rate that can easily exceed \$600 per transport plus fuel, food, and vehicle use. If I were to hire a secure transport company that cost could be over \$1000.00 per transport, which I have had to do due to staffing issues. This trek is taken several times a year, and our mental health calls for service continues to increase exponentially, doubling every 5 years.

Although the financial aspect is concerning and draining, it also affects staffing. Most importantly, please consider the mental anguish it has on an already fragile patient. Recently, we had a patient in crisis that was able to strip a screw off from the cage of the squad car and consumed it. The patient was in a manic state and started hitting their head off the window and cage. The Deputy had to pull the squad car over on the side of the road and call for backup. An ambulance was called and the patient now had to be evaluated medically, leaving our officer now sitting at a hospital in a remote area between my county and Winnebago. There are several factual scenarios like this that happen all too often. Having a facility closer will assist in eliminating patient anxiety and minimizing situations such as this. The conveniences that we may share while on a long car ride are not shared when on a transport. A simple restroom stop, for safety and security, must take place at a Sheriff's Office, not a roadside gas station. A restroom need can cause extra stress and embarrassment on a person already in crises.

The citizens in our great state, which are in need of a mental health facility for treatment, deserve better than what is offered. To place a person in handcuffs and transported four hours away is inhumane and unacceptable.

My request is that you will vote yes to this bill so we can better serve our citizens in a time of mental health crisis.



ALTOONA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1904 Spooner Avenue, Altoona, WI. 54720
(715) 839-6090, Fax (715) 839-1610

Kelly Bakken
Police Chief

February 7, 2020

State Senator
Chairman Patrick Testin
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Chairman Testin and other committee members,

I am issuing this Letter of Support to encourage the Department of Health Services to award a grant to HSHS in Eau Claire County for the expansion of psychiatric beds. The expansion of psychiatric beds is desperately needed for those individuals suffering from mental health challenges and especially for those who meet the criteria for emergency detention.

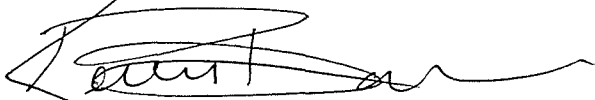
Currently, there is a shortage of mental health beds in the Northwest portion of the state, which forces law enforcement to take emergency detentions to Winnebago. Not only does transporting a mental health patient to Winnebago cost law enforcement agencies, on the Northwest side of the state, a tremendous amount of money, but it also adds unnecessary stress on a patient that is already suffering from a terrible mental health condition. Placing a mental health patient in handcuffs in the backseat of a squad car for six hours is only adding to the already complex mental health condition.

I have personally had to transport emergency detention patients to Winnebago on many occasions. I can attest transporting a mental health patient in the backseat of a squad car for 6 hours is not helpful to the patient. One situation I recall vividly, I was transporting an emergency detention patient, who had attempted to suffocate herself by tying a plastic bag over her head, to Winnebago. There weren't any emergency detention beds available any closer than Winnebago, roughly a 6-hour drive. It was dark during the transport because most of the emergency detentions seem to happen at night. I attempted to communicate with the patient, so I knew she was okay while in the backseat. When she stopped communicating with me, I stopped the car to check on her. I found her unconscious in the backseat because she had taken the seat belt and wrapped it around her neck in an attempt to kill herself. I quickly took her seatbelt off and performed life-saving measures until she was talking to me again. This could have

been avoided entirely had there been an emergency detention bed at a closer location.

I sincerely hope you pass this bill and award the grant funding to HSHS Eau Claire, so care and treatment can be provided to mental health patients closer to home, where they have the support of friends and family. Not only will this bill help those patients, but it will remove a tremendous burden from law enforcement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Bakken', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chief Kelly Bakken

Clark County Sheriff's Office

Scott A. Haines
Sheriff



James A. Hirsch
Chief Deputy

517 Court Street-Room 308, Neillsville, WI 54456
Phone: 1-800-743-2420 or 715-743-5278
Confidential Tip Line: 888-847-2576 (TIP-CLSO)
Fax: 715-743-4350

February 5, 2020

Chairman Testin and other committee members:

Thank you for hearing AB443/SB405 today. I am writing in support of this proposed bill. This is not a want; this is a need in the State of Wisconsin. Money needs to be invested to provide better mental health services and facilities. Doing so would be a benefit to the State of Wisconsin. Thanks you.

Sincerely,

Scott Haines
Clark County Sheriff

Human Services Division
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Fax 715-395-1370

Health Division
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Fax 715-395-1434


Douglas County
Department of Health and Human Services
1316 N. 14th Street • Superior, WI 54880

Patricia A. Schanen
Director



Suite 327
Phone 715-395-1234
Fax 715-395-7371

The Honorable Senate James Summerfield-Tittl
The Honorable Assembly Bernier Tiffany
Joint Finance Committee
305 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Re: AB 443/SB 405

Thank you for the opportunity to represent my county in this matter. My name is Dave Longsdorf; I am the Deputy Director/Adult Services Manager for Douglas County Department of Health and Human Services.

I am testifying today in support of AB 443/SB 405.

The Medicaid reimbursement rate for acute care inpatient psychiatric hospitalization is not sufficient to sustain this service. As a result, there has been a significant shortfall in the availability of inpatient psychiatric beds in the northern part of the state.

As an example, Cumberland Memorial Hospital was unable to sustain its inpatient psychiatric unit. Northern Wisconsin suffered a significant loss with the closing of the inpatient behavioral health unit 2013. This was a loss of 10 inpatient psychiatric beds.

Regional hospitals have chosen not to develop new inpatient psychiatric beds as they are not able to fiscally sustain them. This has resulted in no addition to the availability of inpatient psychiatric beds.

The reduction of inpatient beds and the lack of new beds created in Northwestern Wisconsin has put a considerable strain on remaining area hospitals. Often they cannot admit a patient and must divert to another location. When an acute care psychiatric bed cannot be found locally, the use of the Winnebago Mental Health Institute (WMHI) often becomes necessary. Winnebago has reported having a census in excess of 100% due to increased utilization by counties. The utilization of the Winnebago Mental Health Institute has increased in the last five years in Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland and Iron counties. There is frequently no other choice. Unlike the cost of an inpatient stay at a private hospital, which is funded by Medicaid, the cost of services at WMHI falls directly on counties. This creates a tremendous fiscal burden on already strained county resources.

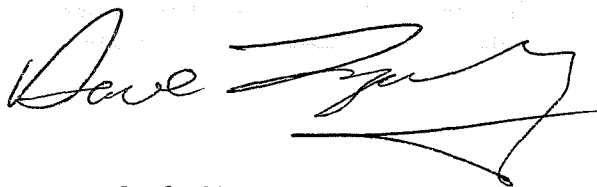
MISSION

To promote the health, safety, and well-being of individuals and families

Residents under a Chapter 51 civil commitment are transported by secure transport to the receiving hospital. Transport can be made by a private security transport company, but is more often made by local law enforcement. In Northern Wisconsin, this results in a minimum of a 2.5 hour drive to Eau Claire if an acute care psychiatric bed is located. If no bed is available in Eau Claire, Winnebago Mental Health Institute is more than 5.5 hours from any of our counties. Individuals in mental health distress are placed in the back of a squad car for this extended period of time and separated from their natural supports, primary care providers, and community. If the transport is made by local police or sheriff's-staff there is a decrease of law enforcement presence. This adds a public safety concern in addition to the cost of the transport. The sizeable increase in mental health transports has also placed a considerable fiscal burden on county resources.

I am asking for your support for AB 443/SB 405. This would add greatly needed inpatient psychiatric beds to the northern region.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Longsdorf". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Dave Longsdorf, MA
DCDHHS - Deputy Director/Adult Services Manager
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Superior, WI 54880