



Sen. John Hoffman  
2111 Minnesota Senate Building  
95 University Ave West  
St. Paul MN 55155

April 8, 2024

Dear Sen. Hoffman,

Our organizations wanted to thank you for including Article 2, section 3 of your bill which require the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to submit a waiver application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement a medical assistance demonstration project to provide health care and coordination services that bridge to community-based services for individuals confined in state, local, or Tribal correctional facilities prior to community reentry.

Each of our organizations advocate for much needed funding for substance use disorder programs and recovery and treatment options. However, despite our best efforts and the efforts of many other organizations, substance use disorder still remains woefully underfunded without a dedicated funding source and is not a cohesive continuum of care. This is especially true for incarcerated populations throughout Minnesota.

Coverage for substance use disorder and other mental health services would be requested for persons incarcerated in state and county facilities and the objective of this waiver would be to provide SUD treatment to eligible incarcerated individuals in order to ensure this high-risk population receives needed treatment before release, and to strengthen follow up care and coordination with a Medicaid provider before release.

As lawmakers you know that substance use disorders (SUDs) are a significant health problem in the United States (U.S.), affecting far more people than receive treatment. The substantial prison population in the United States is strongly connected to drug-related offenses. While the exact rates of inmates with substance use disorders (SUDs) is difficult to measure, some research shows that an estimated 65% percent of the United States prison population has an active SUD.

According to the National Institute of Health, decades of science shows that providing comprehensive substance use treatment to criminal offenders while incarcerated works, reducing both drug use and crime after an inmate returns to the community. Treatment while in jail or prison is critical to reducing overall crime and other drug-related societal burdens—such as lost job productivity, family disintegration and a continual return to jail or prison, known as recidivism. Inadequate treatment while incarcerated also contributes to overdoses and deaths when inmates leave the prison system.

**We believe this legislation is also about being good stewards of our tax dollars. Every day, Minnesotans continue to devote resources to a system that isn't working, and isn't saving lives. We have a responsibility to ensure that our tax dollars are being put toward evidence-based and effective solutions to this epidemic. This legislation will ensure that people leaving prison or jail and re-entering the community have access to the care they need to live safely.**

**We thank you for authoring this important legislation.**