



March 4, 2025

Chair Wiklund & Committee Members,

My name is Ty Hegland and I serve as CEO of Prairie St. John's located in Fargo, ND. Prairie is the regional leader in Acute Psychiatric and Behavioral Health services offering a 132 bed acute psychiatric hospital, four clinics, two supportive housing facilities, and much more. Annually we receive 12,000 referrals for service from a catchment area spanning 200,000 square miles with over 50% of those patients coming from Minnesota. We serve the most complex psychiatric patients in the region and are incredibly proud of our mission.

I stand before the committee to ask for a Do Pass on SF 1173. This bill is a simple update of Section 245.50, subdivision 3 to update the interstate agreement regarding cross border treatment of individuals with mental illness. The State of North Dakota has already passed a corresponding bill to address this issue.

Though this bill is filled with very technical language the intent of this bill is very simple, which is to allow patients who are on both a commitment and probation to cross state lines for care. Though it is a small update, it has the ability to impact thousands of individuals across the region and is critical for five reasons:

1. Closer Access To Care

Due to the rural nature of our region and parameters of the interstate agreement, rural patients are often forced to travel hundreds of miles because they cannot cross the border to receive care or they are forced to sit in emergency rooms, med surg beds, etc.. This bill would make access to care easier.

2. Risk Reduction For Patients

Inpatient psychiatric facilities are forced to turn away thousands of patients who are desperately seeking inpatient care who may become a danger to themselves or others. This bill will allow for timely access for patients in crisis.

3. Risk Reduction For Law Enforcement

At times, border city law enforcement and corrections personnel are unable to access inpatient care for individuals in close proximity to their jurisdiction. This bill will provide public servants with more options and stave off patients from committing additional crimes and/or harm to others.

4. Clarifying State Law

For years different entities have had different interpretations of this agreement. This includes providers, patients, probation, parole, etc.. This bill will clarify pathways for patients and make it easier for them to navigate the system.

5. Freeing Up ER's & CAH's

Patients on probation and commitment quite often sit in ER's in hospitals for extensive periods of time waiting for an inpatient psychiatric bed to come available. This bill would alleviate pressure on ER's and CAH's.

In closing, I thank you for your time and ask for a Do Pass on SF 1173. If you have any additional questions, I would ask you reach out at ty.hegland@uhsinc.com or 701-351-3391.

Ty Hegland
CEO
Prairie St. John's