



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: August 17, 2017

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The Rising Cost of Community Safety

A 2020 Vision of Mental Health's Impact on Crow Wing County

"I know what it's like to be miserable. I thought I would stay miserable forever." 25-year-old Travis Hettver was born and raised in the Brainerd area and first started using Crow Wing County Community Services in 2011. "I needed help after I graduated from high school. Crow Wing County basically helped me to stay alive and gave me the necessities. I started suffering from depression and then using drugs to cope. I found it easier to interact with people when I was on drugs because I didn't feel very good about myself. I needed to get some mental health help." Travis has been in treatment for both depression and drugs. "My social worker has helped me learn to really try. Even though nobody can do it for you, I've had help so that I can try and do it on my own. You have to make your change. I came to the realization that I was not going down the right road and something had to be done." One out of 4 people suffer from a symptom of mental illness in the United States. Suicide, anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are very common and very real mental health concerns in Minnesota and Crow Wing County. The County continues to experience rising costs to treat residents for mental health.

The History of Mental Health Hospitals

State and federal governments began closing state hospitals and worked towards providing local housing and services for people with mental illness. From 2006-2008, 4 state hospitals were closed, including the Brainerd State hospital. The idea was to keep people with mental disabilities near their homes and families. A Community Behavioral Health Hospital (CBHH) was built in Baxter in 2007 with a maximum of 16 beds and an expected length of stay of less than 30 days. The plan was for local residents to go to the CBHH in Baxter. Although if there isn't enough bed space they need to go to other CBHH's in the state or the Regional Treatment center in Anoka. At times there aren't enough beds available and that creates waiting lists. "When you have to leave your community for treatment, it can take longer for someone to get better." said Crow Wing County Family and Public Health Services Program Manager Kara Griffin. "Without the support of being near your home and everything familiar, there is added stress which adds to recovery timelines."

Crow Wing County pays 100 percent of Mental Health Costs

At one-time, Crow Wing County paid 50 percent of the cost to treat mental health while the State of Minnesota paid the other 50 percent. In 2015, the State of Minnesota shifted the entire cost to Minnesota Counties. **Crow Wing County is 100 percent responsible** for the cost of mental health care for those who no longer meet the criteria for facility level care. "We've always had a strong proactive mental health strategy. For seven years, we've been able to re organize and make shifts to adjust thereby participating in seven years of county levy reductions. Each year becomes more and more difficult." says Community Services Director Kara Terry. Once a CBHH or Anoka staff determine a patient no longer has the immediate medical needs to stay at the facility, the costs start adding up for Crow Wing County. The County pays a daily cost for each resident, even if their care takes place somewhere else in Minnesota. It costs

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Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

\$1,390 **per day** for care in Anoka and \$1,465 **per day** at a CBHH. If it takes 15 days to find a transition for someone, the cost is \$21,975. "Costs add up very quickly because it takes time to determine where a patient should go once they are eligible for discharge. There is transportation, examinations, medications and housing to consider." said Tami Lueck, Crow Wing County Adult Services Programs Manager. "Sometimes it isn't an option for an individual to return home to their family. If we don't receive enough advance notice, we can and have ended up with sizeable bills that are now locally funded 100% through property taxes instead of the 50% cost share we used to have with the State."

Out of Home Placements and Juvenile Detention

Out of Home Placements are another rapidly rising cost to the County. Out of Home Placements (OHP) are up 25% statewide. OHP is when children and teens up to the age of 21 are placed away from their homes for care and treatment. Victims of abuse and neglect need to be placed in a safe living environment until they can safely return home or find permanent living arrangements. Some delinquent juveniles age 19 and under are sent to correctional facilities for their actions. Counties are required to pay for kids that are displaced from their home by their parents' poor choices or because of their own behavior problems. "Sadly, parents don't always make good choices. We have to help to ensure kids are in a safe place and then work to stop the cycle of abuse or neglect. Sometimes, the community can help and offer ways to help those with learned poor behaviors or the lack of good parenting skills to better their family." says Ronda Kline, Crow Wing County Family Services Supervisor. "When it's about the kid's poor behavior choices, especially if a child or teen is going to hurt themselves or others, we need to step in. If a child is in need of protection or corrections and the family either cannot or will not make the necessary changes, we're going to step in. It's all about keeping kids and our community safe. These situations don't discriminate. They happen to families from all walks of life. Every child and adult deserves health and well-being, especially within their own home. The rising costs and caseloads have been a really big challenge."

In 2009, it cost \$2,037,346 for OHP in Crow Wing County

In 2016, it cost \$2,158,863

In 2017, at the current rate, it's projected to cost \$2,409,535

In 2013 there were 135 kids in OHP. Year to date, there have been 191 kids in OHP. The rising number of children and teens in Out of Home Placement also puts a strain on law enforcement, Probation, the County Attorney's Office, and the court system. "The problem affects our entire human service and criminal justice system in dramatic ways that come with an additional cost to Crow Wing County." said Terry.

Crow Wing County Community Corrections Probation staff are trained and using proven assessment tools to build relationships with high risk youth. Ann Rivas, Crow Wing County Community Corrections Director, says opening up dialogue with young offenders has been a huge step forward. "We're asking them what they need help with. Instead of telling them what to do. We're trying to prevent risky behavior that would bring them back to court. We aren't going to put a kid in detention unless we have to. But, our first priority is to look at public safety."

What is Crow Wing County doing?

In mental health, Crow Wing County Community Services collaborates with schools, neighboring counties, and offers safety planning at home for residents. Staff work closely with facilities across the state to stay connected to a patient's needs. Crow Wing County is part of Region 5+ Adult Mental Health Initiative. This also includes Aitkin, Cass, Morrison, Todd and Wadena counties as well as Leech Lake and Mille Lacs tribes. The purpose is to coordinate, plan and partner on programs that assist local units of government. Partnerships with crisis services and law enforcements agencies is always a top priority. Northern Pines Mental Health Center in Brainerd was selected in June to participate in a federal pilot program designating the facility as a

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic. The plan is to coordinate care for patients across several providers and expand consistent use of mental health practices. In February, Crow Wing County Commissioners approved a resolution supporting the State of Minnesota return counties to their previous role of covering half of the cost for mental health care. "This started as the state doing a cost share and it has become a cost shift." said Crow Wing County Commissioner Chair, Doug Houge. "We didn't pause for a moment to sign the resolution hoping to get the Legislature and Governor to undo the action that was changed in 2015. We're trying to fund mental health services in the state of Minnesota with local property taxes and it's going to be tough to continue at this pace."

These aren't Numbers These Are Our Neighbors

Crow Wing County Community Services staff are striving towards community engagement and encouraging residents to get involved and stay connected. "Each of these situations is about a real person or real family. They are our friends, our neighbors, or maybe a family member, or maybe a relative's family. And, in each of these situations, someone is suffering who don't need to suffer alone—sometimes that's a neglected or abused child, sometimes that's the family of a child who is out of control, sometimes that's a person struggling with depression, or some other mental health issue that they cannot fix by themselves without help." says Terry. "Sometimes you can pull yourself up. But sometimes, you can't do it yourself and you need help. We aren't always welcome, but we always try to help."

"I feel lucky that I had help. I've learned life is actually worth trying." says Travis. He is currently in a recovery center and says music and basketball are helping him to get in shape and focus. "Everything about that (Community Services) building has been good for me. I know my social worker and Crow Wing County provide me with support. I'm very excited to see what I can do with my life and change."

Kline says you can't always put a price on it. "What is the value of a safe community? If we value Crow Wing County as Minnesota's favorite place, we all need to work together to provide a safe protected place for our residents and visitors. To be sure, the investment isn't free, but when you see it work, the return is priceless."

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State Hospital Timeline

1958-Brainerd School and Hospital for mentally disabled people opens

1960-State of Minnesota operates 11 state hospitals that house about 16,000 people

1985-Governor Rudy Perpich officially changes the name of state hospitals to regional treatment centers

2006-2008 Minnesota closes 4 regional treatment centers at Brainerd, St. Peter, Fergus Falls, and Willmar

2006-Community Behavioral Health Hospitals (CBHH) open around Minnesota. They have a maximum of 16 beds with an expected length of stay of less than 30 days.

2007-CBHH opens in Baxter

2017-Crow Wing County Commissioners sign a resolution supporting the State of Minnesota return counties to their previous role of covering half of the cost for mental health care.
