

**Appropriations Committee**  
**Department of Health and Human Services Testimony**  
**March 26, 2013**

**Scot Adams, Director**  
**Division of Behavioral Health**

Good afternoon Chairman Mello and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Scot Adams (S-C-O-T A-D-A-M-S), Director of the Division of Behavioral Health in the Department of Health and Human Services. I am here today to request the Appropriations Committee fully fund the Governor's budget recommendation for the Hastings Juvenile Chemical Dependency Program and other needs regarding the Hastings Regional Center campus.

The Governor's recommendation includes renovation of Building 3 for the Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) Hastings Juvenile Chemical Dependency Program for male youth and the demolition of vacant and unused buildings on the campus. The Governor's recommendation is comprehensive. The renovations and their costs are phased across three fiscal years to minimize impact to the state's budget. Specifically, this plan includes:

- \$5.2 million to renovate Building 3 to bring it to modern codes and needs.
- \$3.1 million to demolish the unused, vacant buildings on the campus.
- A reduction in operational costs from \$8 million to \$6.4 million per year by having fewer staff and fewer costs of heating, cooling and other costs paid to DAS.
- Returning good agricultural land to the private sector by selling several hundred acres of now unneeded land. Based on land prices in Adams County in the Fall of 2012, we expect to generate \$1.4 million from the sale of this property with proceeds from the sale serving to reimburse the funds used to finance the renovation and demolition of unused buildings.

The renovation of Building 3 includes bringing all services up to modern standards, including installing a new HVAC system and renovating the facility for program services, for example, to include an exercise area. The total program statement is available online on the Department's web site and I have provided copies to the Committee today, along with a handout of these budget projections.

We expect this plan in total will pay for itself in about four years' time, and after that will save taxpayers money.

The Hastings Juvenile Chemical Dependency Program fills a unique need in Nebraska. As the Lincoln Regional Center has become the back-up for the community-based behavioral health system for adults, the Hastings Chemical Dependency Program has become that back-up for community-based services for male youth needing chemical dependency treatment.

The Hastings Juvenile Chemical Dependency Program promotes a recovery model that addresses, through a multi-dimensional approach to therapeutic programming, substance

abuse problems; mental health problems; medical issues resulting from substance abuse; and defiance, conduct and criminogenic behavior. The Program individualizes and incorporates developmentally appropriate, learning-approach appropriate, culturally sensitive, and trauma specific strategies to help the young men in individual therapy, family therapy, and group processes.

While most of the youth served at the Hastings Program are referred from YRTC-Kearney, we also receive referrals from Magellan Health Services. This is a significant point since some people may think the community can easily accept these young men. Here are some facts about the young people served:

- The male youth who are at the YRTC-Kearney are there because probation or other placements in the community have not been successful, and they have been referred to the Hastings Juvenile Chemical Dependency Program.
- Magellan Health Services recently requested that the Division of Behavioral health expand the mission of the program to young people with difficult backgrounds who otherwise would be sent out-of-state for treatment.
- Many of the young men admitted to the program have offender backgrounds such that community-based treatment centers have been reluctant to accept them into their treatment milieus, resulting in the State left to provide this service.

With the Hastings Program in place, these young men are served in a secure environment and do not need to be moved out-of-state in order to receive the services.

During each of the last six years, I have asked for a point-in-time study of youth served through the program to describe for me the type of young men we are serving. You have this data, by year, in your handouts. The bottom line is that in most years, more than 95% of admissions to the program had been at community-based treatment centers at least four times before entering the Hastings Program.

This is why I said at the beginning of my testimony that this program is the back-up for the community-based system for youth who cannot be served in the community. It is appropriate for the State to provide this level of care so these young men receive treatment in Nebraska.

The proposal to renovate the Hastings campus is comprehensive and I urge the Committee to support it.

The program statement proposes to reduce the number of beds in the program from 40 to 24. I believe this is the current need in the State, based on our experience over the past 18-24 months with the community-based services that are in place. This plan reduces operating staff from about 110 FTE's today to around 83. The program envisions the demolition of unused and vacant buildings will result in good agricultural land being returned to the private sector by selling off several hundred acres of now unneeded land currently owned by the state. These actions will help pay for the costs of the plan.

I urge the Committee to fully fund the Governor's recommendation. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.