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Court Administrator

JUL 5 2011

By BH Deputy

Petition in the matter continued funding of Vail Place services during a statewide shutdown.

Special Master  
Honorable Judge Kathleen Blatz

62CV115203

Vail Place, a Minnesota 501(c)(3) nonprofit and community based mental health agency, would like you to consider continued funding of DHS Adult Mental Health Grants during the statewide shutdown.

Vail Place provides essential housing, employment, social supports, health and wellness services to over 1700 Hennepin County adults annually who have a serious and persistent mental illness. Our agency serves people who have been determined disabled by their mental illness, and for many, Vail Place is their only access to the community and support which prevents psychiatric crises and hospitalizations, homelessness, civil commitment and incarceration.

Without our services, many individuals would lose the ability to access their most basic needs -- medications, food, housing -- putting them at serious personal risk and imposing huge costs in resources and money, to the community. Vail Place serves over 100 people daily, who attend our services to access resources and supports that allow them to live in the community, rather than return to a psychiatric hospitalization. Our agency also provides crisis assistance and referrals to crisis housing for people receiving services. Our services also help people find housing, prevent homelessness and evictions. In addition, we are an access for medical and food assistance, and referrals for other needed services.

I would ask you to consider Vail Place services meeting the criteria of "maintenance of safety and immediate public health concerns", as outlined in the decision issued by Judge Kathleen Gearin.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Vail Place.

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## Testimony on behalf of Vail Place and Adult Mental Health Funds

For me and my peers Vail Place is not an optional service. Without Vail Place I will most certainly lose control of my mental health. For me this means that the voices that I hear will become out of control, I will feel suicidal most of the time having obsessive thoughts of killing myself. I know this because I have had a mental illness since 1982. I was recently reminded of how severe the voices can get when I had foot surgery three weeks ago and I had to be at home in bed. After about a week I told my surgeon I was going back to Vail Place before I ended up in the hospital or worse yet decided to listen to the obsessive thoughts and take my own life. Bed rest was simply not an option any longer. I don't say that to scare you - I tell you this because I am afraid that something so necessary for my life could be considered optional.

What I get at Vail Place is a place to ease the isolation that causes my symptoms to worsen. I get almost daily support from staff and peers. I can call Vail Place if I need phone support. I have a place that quite frankly if it didn't exist I would be dead. That is why my case manager sent me to Vail Place. Before I started at Vail Place I was hospitalized 5 to 6 times a year for weeks at a time. Since starting at Vail eight years ago I have only been in the hospital three short times. It has been four years since my last visit to an inpatient hospital unit. It may seem trivial to need some place for support. But the support of Vail Place saves money and lives every day it operates. It is a necessary service for the health and well being of people with mental illness which includes myself.

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