



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
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January 3, 2006

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Honorable Jane Ranum, Chair
Public Safety Budget Division

Honorable Fran Bradley, Chair
Health Policy & Finance Committee

Honorable Becky Lourey, Chair
Health & Family Security Committee

Honorable Linda Berglin, Chair
Health & Human Services Budget Division

Dear Committee Chairs:

Special Session Laws 2003, Chapter 2, art. 5, sec. 14, directed the Commissioners of Corrections and Human Services to evaluate alternative placements provided to offenders with mental illness under M.S. §609.1055. This report provides information related to the development of supervised alternative living programs for offenders with serious and persistent mental illness, as defined in M.S. §245.462, subd. 20, para. (c).

Established programs must provide a structured residential component and include mental health treatment and counseling, living and employment skills development, and supported employment.

The Department of Human Services received and approved an application from a nonprofit entity to provide intensive rehabilitative mental health services under M.S. §256B.0622, including application and approval for a Rule 36 license, which includes the applicable requirements contained in M.S. §256B.0622 and Minnesota Rules, parts 9520.0500 to 9520.0630, and application and approval to enroll as a Medical Assistance provider. Approval status provided the funding for the social services and mental health treatment component of the proposed program. However, significant barriers to development and implementation of program services were encountered when residential properties identified in two different cities were impacted by local zoning issues. A six-bed intensive residential treatment facility is nearing completion to provide services in early 2006.

While there appears to be a sufficient number of potential candidates for this type of placement, finding appropriate employment for these offenders is becoming an issue. Since the 9/11 attacks, many employers are reluctant to hire employees or contract with companies who hire felons.



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Given the nature of this program, all candidates have a felon history. As a result, the nonprofit entity is finding it difficult to secure employment for its residents. The 2005 Legislature enacted a law in an effort to locate appropriate employment but, to date, this has not been fruitful.

If you have questions regarding this report, please contact Nanette Schroeder, Director of Health Services for the Minnesota Department of Corrections, at 651/603-0165.

Sincerely,

/s/
Joan Fabian
Corrections Commissioner

/s/
Kevin Goodno
Human Services Commissioner

c: Chief Clerk of the House
Secretary of the Senate
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