



March 20, 2015

Contact: Katie Mintz
Communications
651-431-5605
Kathryn.Mintz@state.mn.us

Mental health proposal to invest \$39M in comprehensive care *Commissioner Jesson visits Northern Pines Mental Health Center in Brainerd*

BRAINERD, Minn. – Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson visited Brainerd Friday to highlight a broad legislative package with improvements to Minnesota’s mental health system, including a new statewide hotline for mental health crisis services.

Gov. Mark Dayton’s two-year budget recommends more than \$39 million to shore up Minnesota’s continuum of care for mental health, covering prevention, early intervention and treatment, and supports for recovery over the long term. More than 230,000 adults and 75,000 children with mental illness and their families will have access to comprehensive services under the proposal.

“Minnesota’s mental health system is fragile. Services are in demand and our capacity to provide them is not keeping up,” Jesson said. “This proposal starts to fill the gaps that now exist, and will help to ensure that Minnesotans across the state can access the right combination of treatment, services and supports at the right time.”

As part of the mental health package, \$4.7 million will establish a single statewide emergency phone number for crisis services and provide around-the-clock coverage across Minnesota by July 2018. While the state has made great strides in expanding access to crisis services in recent years, the quality and availability of these services still varies greatly from region to region.

“When a person is experiencing crisis, the last thing they need is confusion and frustration when trying to get help. Making these services easily accessible, like they are in Brainerd, will help so many Minnesotans,” said Jesson, who toured Northern Pines Mental Health Center on Friday, visiting consumers and meeting with certified peer recovery specialists at Our Place Drop-in Center. Working with 24/7 Crisis Line and Referral Service, Northern Pines provides regional mobile crisis outreach services for Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena counties, and is also developing a new residential crisis service for the region.

In addition to expanding mental health crisis services, the governor’s plan would increase rates for crisis services and develop a plan to stabilize the mental health payment infrastructure. It will increase capacity to serve individuals with complex conditions, as well as develop more supportive housing options for adults with serious mental illness and expand access to community-based services. It will grow the mental health workforce by expanding psychiatric residency programs, and will also invest in services to meet children’s mental health needs.

Overviews of the governor's budget initiatives to [strengthen Minnesota's mental health system](#) and [focus on children's mental health](#), as well as more details about the proposals, are on the DHS [2015 session fact sheets page](#).