

APPENDIX 10

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Wyoming State Legislature
Joint Subcommittee on Title TXXV
Wyoming Legislative Service Office
213 State Capitol
Cheyenne, WY 82002

RE: Comments for Subcommittee's 8/12/15 Meeting

Dear Chairman Ross and Chairman Throne:

The Board of Commissioners of Fremont County has asked me to submit comments on their behalf for tomorrow's Title XXV Joint Subcommittee meeting. I apologize that no one could come and speak to you in person due to prior commitments.

Fremont County has experienced a worsening problem regarding TXXV cases, in that during past few years psychiatric beds in the state have become increasingly short in supply. Our local facility, Pine Ridge, is often full. Therefore, we often used to send patients to WBI (Wyoming Behavioral Institute). Now, however, WBI is frequently full as well and we can find no other facilities in the state which will accept our TXXV patients. The last time this happened we put the patient in jail, as the statute allows, since we had no other options. However, the State Hospital is so short on beds (and for awhile, staff, but we don't know if that has been remedied) that they did not have a place for this patient and he was 35th on a waiting list to get down there, if I recall correctly. The patient's attorney finally filed a motion to have the State Hospital held in contempt, after the patient spent approximately 40 days in jail without treatment.

Often we will get a new case and there is nowhere in the state to place the patient. The jail is not compelled by statute to take TXXV patients, and will soon refuse to accept patients at all. Our only options will be to place such patients at a psych facility out of state, or place them

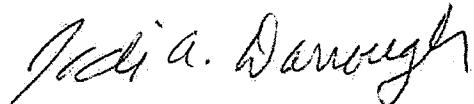
in the hospital itself rather than Pine Ridge. However, the hospital is not compelled to take such a patient, and if they accept the patient, they do not give psychiatric treatment. Both out-of-state placement and hospitalization are expensive solutions.

Besides the physical shortage of psych facilities and beds, one thing we feel is compounding this problem is that, as we understand it, the State let all of the Designated Hospital contracts lapse in recent years, without warning to the counties. A "designated hospital" is one which is supposed to stand in the stead of the WSH until a bed opens up at the WSH or the patient recovers enough for release, pursuant to Wyoming Dept. Of Health Rules, State Hospital, Chapter 7, Section 4. This is pursuant to Dept. of Health Rules. So, we have absolutely no way of compelling any facility to take our TXCV patients. Also, if a patient is violent in any way, most facilities refuse to take the patient, and again, we have no method of compelling any facility to keep such a patient.

Even if we find a facility to take a patient, there still remains the question of transportation to that facility. There is nothing in the law which states it must be the Sheriff who transports patients. If our sheriff has to transport out of county or out of state, it is time consuming and costly.

These issues have only worsened over the past few years. We request your help in addressing them, and especially in reinstating the Designated Hospital contracts, or finding an alternative solution.

Very truly yours,



Jodi A. Darrough
Deputy Fremont County
& Prosecuting Attorney