

**Advocacy Groups, Providers, and Law Enforcement Back Regional Mental Health Crisis Centers  
Over 55 Groups Ask Legislators to Fund Local Crisis Resources**

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Mental health advocates, providers, and law enforcement organizations are united in calling for improvements to Wisconsin's mental health crisis system, and ask legislators to support the budget proposal to allocate \$2,500,000 in 2020-21 to fund regional crisis centers for adults.

Over 55 groups signed on to a letter asking legislators to fully fund the proposal to establish a network of regional crisis centers, which would provide better outcomes for people experiencing mental health crises, and make better use of law enforcement resources. The letter has been shared with the Legislature in advance of Tuesday's Joint Finance Committee session which will include consideration of regional crisis centers.

Wisconsin's current mental health crisis system is lacking local resources. In 2018, over 3,000 people experiencing a mental health crisis were transported from their community to Winnebago Mental Health Institute, far away from their support network and their mental health providers.

"Individuals experiencing a mental health crisis deserve to receive prompt treatment and care in their own communities where their families reside. In addition, long transports to Winnebago put financial and resource strains on law enforcement, taking them out of their communities for hours at a time. We need a better system for all involved," said Crystal Hester, Public Policy and Advocacy Director for NAMI Wisconsin.

Law enforcement back the need to develop local crisis resources. "The current emergency detention process in Wisconsin is very time consuming for law enforcement. Depending on their location, officers are spending multiple hours, sometimes an entire day, transporting an individual to Winnebago," said Grant County Sheriff Nate Dreckman. "These lost hours increase the workload for other on-duty officers and impact the public safety of Wisconsin residents. Building more regional capacity for emergency detention is the long-term solution to addressing this crisis for more emergency detention beds."

The success of regional crisis centers will depend on on engaging stakeholders in the planning and implementation process. "Our organizations endorse the proposal and the need for a stakeholder advisory group, including people who have lived experience with the crisis system, advocates, counties, mental health providers, and law enforcement," said Barbara Beckert, Disability Rights Wisconsin Milwaukee Office Director. "We stand ready to help advance this change."