



Luther S. Olsen

State Senator
14th District

TO: Assembly Committee on Local Government
FROM: Senator Luther Olsen
DATE: October 22, 2019
SUBJECT: Testimony in favor of Assembly Bill 530.

Thank you Chairman Novak and the Assembly Committee on Local Government for holding a hearing and allowing me to testify in favor of Assembly Bill 530.

This legislation is part of a broader package of bills recommended by the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention. This bipartisan task force was created in March of 2019 and held several public hearings across the state with the objective of evaluating the current resources for suicide prevention and identifying opportunities to target and assist at-risk individuals.

Assembly Bill 530 focuses on local mental health organizations. These local organizations provide help and resources to those experiencing mental health issues and suicidal thoughts in our communities. They are the frontline resource for individuals struggling with suicidal thoughts in our local communities.

This legislation seeks to grow the number of local mental health organizations and coalitions throughout Wisconsin by requiring the Department of Health Services to award grants to local mental health organizations or coalitions for suicide prevention programming. These grants will help localities start a mental health organization or allow them to strengthen an existing one. Any organization receiving a grant will be required to match 20% of the grant amount.

In addition, there will be an amendment introduced to address feedback received from DHS and other stakeholders.

Thank you, members. I ask for your support and would be more than happy to answer any questions.



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

TO: Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Local Government

FROM: State Representative Nancy VanderMeer

DATE: October 22, 2019

SUBJECT: Testimony in support of Assembly Bill 530 and Senate Bill 504 - relating to grants for suicide prevention programming

Thank you Chairman Novak and members of the Assembly Committee on Local Government for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 530 today. This bill would award grants to local mental health organizations for the purpose of suicide prevention. Using the grant money, mental health coalitions and organizations will be able to train teachers, first responders and families about how to assist somebody in crisis and refer them to the appropriate help. Further, the grant money can help organizations implement programs, have sufficient staffing and resources, and more.

This bill is one of the recommendations from the Speaker's Task Force on Suicide Prevention, of which I am a member. The Task Force held six public hearings throughout our state, meeting with countless mental health advocates, medical professionals, families and survivors. In listening to mental health professionals and family members of those struggling with suicidal ideation, the need for local support and engagement became clear. All too often, individuals suffering with suicidal thoughts and their families don't know who to turn to or where to seek out help and information. That is why it is so critical to encourage the growth and expansion of local mental health coalitions and organizations. These entities act as a firsthand resource for those struggling with mental health challenges, their family members and communities in general. The resources these organizations offer can include peer-to-peer help, a safe place, training and information for people and families who need a referral for the appropriate mental health care.

On top of that, local mental health organizations help educate communities about mental health. Through this education, the topic of mental health care comes out from behind the shadows, breaking down the stigma that is a barrier for individuals in need of mental health treatment. Mental health organizations hold trainings for schools, local businesses, first responders, law enforcement and the public at large. By bringing awareness to the community, more and more people learn about mental health challenges and how these issues are medical issues, no different than a cold or a broken bone. Allowing this mindset about mental health to



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

permeate throughout our communities and culture is much healthier and fosters more openness for individuals to receive treatment than holding their negative thoughts inside.

Further, this education allows community members to spot the warning signs when an individual may be suicidal. Teachers, first responders, law enforcement and families should all be aware of the warning signs for suicide and know what appropriate action to take if they see someone exhibiting them. Mental health organizations help make sure members of local communities are aware and trained in spotting the warning signs so individuals receive the help they need before it is too late.

Finally, I know the tremendous good mental health coalitions and organizations can do throughout our state firsthand. I am proud to be a member of the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition. I am grateful some members from the coalition have joined us today to share their experiences with the coalition. The Monroe County Mental Health Coalition is run out of the Monroe County Health Department, and provides invaluable services for residents throughout our county. The coalition is made up local government officials, local police departments, local non-profits, Fort McCoy, the Tomah VA, multiple health care centers, the Ho-Chunk Nation, local school superintendents and other community groups. This collaborative, all hands on deck approach incorporates nearly every institution in our community in a shared goal of breaking down stigma and creating mass awareness of what mental health issues are and how they can be treated. The coalition holds regular trainings and awareness activities throughout the year and all over the county. This has done tremendous good in my home county, and I believe similar organizations can have a great benefit throughout our state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. I ask that you join Senator Olsen, Representative Meyers, and myself in supporting this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.



Sparta Police Department

David Kuderer
Chief of Police

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October 22, 2019

Chairman Todd Novak and members of the Local Government Committee thank you for allowing me the floor to testify in support of Assembly Bill 530 today.

My name is Chief David Kuderer of the Sparta Police Department. I have worked with the Sparta Police Department for 39 ½ years. I have been Chief of Police for the last 5 years. I have been a member of the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition since 2012.

The following is an excerpt from the Monroe County Health Improvement Plan for 2019-2021: While Monroe County has not had a large number of adolescent suicides, many Monroe County adolescents exhibit risk factors for youth suicide identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2017). According to the Youth Behavior Risk Survey, Monroe County adolescents exhibited a number of other risk factors for suicide. One of these risk factors includes hopelessness. In 2017, over one out of three of Monroe County adolescents reporting "feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row." This has increased from one out of five in 2011. Suicide ideation is also another risk factor for suicide-19% of Monroe County adolescents reported that they "seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months." This increased from 13 percent in 2011.

Trauma and abuse can impact mental health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term used to describe all types of abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences that occur to people under the age of 18." ACEs include physical, emotion, or sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; and household dysfunction such as violence between adults, substance abuse, parental separation or divorce, and whether a household member was incarcerated, abused substances, or was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal. Research has found that ACEs can lead to poor physical, mental and socioeconomic outcomes later in life and that the more ACEs someone has experienced, the higher their risk of poor outcomes. In Wisconsin, 57% of adults experienced at least one ACE and 14% experienced four or more (Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, 2018). An Article published in 2017 from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel entitled, "Impact of Childhood Trauma Reaches Rural Wisconsin" used 2011-2015 data from the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board and found that 20 percent of Monroe County residents scored four or higher on ACE questionnaires (Schmid & Mollica, 2017).

The Monroe County Mental Health Coalition is the group that is primarily tasked with addressing this health priority. The Coalition started in 2012, based on the needs identified in the Monroe County Community Health Improvement Plan. The coalition is made up of partners from healthcare, law enforcement, education, human services, the United Way, Wisconsin State

Representative Nancy VanderMeer, the Ho-Chunk Nation, Monroe County Safe Community Coalition, Fort McCoy, and many other community partners. The Coalition's vision is, "Improve mental wellness of Monroe County" and their mission is to, "Improve access to the mental wellness services and reduce stigma across the generations." End of excerpt.

The coalition's partners have done a lot of great things to help the residents of Monroe County as follows:

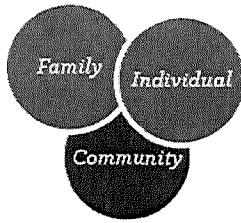
- May is Mental Health Awareness month and the coalition conducts a proclamation signing event with officials from the city of Sparta, Tomah, Fort McCoy and Monroe County. The event would include a speaker for educating the public on the stigma of mental health plus provide training to the public on ACEs and Trauma Informed Care.
- A Teen Wellness Day was conducted to provide mental health education to Tomah, Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton sophomores, and students at Sparta SAILS. Education included international mental health speaker Mettie Spiess on suicide prevention. There were sessions on mental health and mindfulness from Gundersen and the UW-La Crosse psychology department. Mettie also did an evening presentation to the general public.
- 325 gun locks for suicide prevention were handed out through Fort McCoy Army Substance Abuse program, National Night Out, and June Dairy Days.
- Question Persuade Refer (QPR) training was provided to Cashton High School, Sparta Middle School and local law enforcement officers.
- ACEs training was conducted for area school teachers a year before the training was required by the state.
- Law enforcement officers in Sparta, Tomah and Monroe County were trained on ACEs.
- Worked with the youth mental health focus group in Cashton, so we could better understand how youth handle mental health issues.
- Coalition members attended professional development opportunities related to mental health (i.e. Self-injury Conference; Adolescent Health Symposium, Tomah VA Mental Health Summit)
- Developed and distributed Mental Health Resource Guide to the public.
- Collaboration with school districts for various mental health resources, training, networking and support.
- Coalition members conducted mental presentations to Monroe County Tavern League, Sparta Middle School Wellness Day, Tomah Catalyst, and Monroe County Retired Teachers Association.

Thanks to its dedicated members the coalition has made some improvements in mental wellness in Monroe County but there is still a lot of work that needs to get done to change the mental health stigma. I thank you for the time you have given me to speak in support of Bill 530.

Sincerely,



David Kuderer
Chief of Police



Monroe County Health Department

Serving the Community since 1921

October 21, 2019

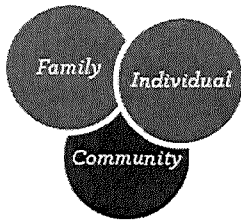
Dear Committee on Local Government,

My name is Kayleigh Day and I am a Community Health Educator for Monroe County Health Department. As part of my position, I coordinate Monroe County's Mental Health Coalition. The Monroe County Mental Health Coalition started in 2012, based on needs identified in the Monroe County Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan. Mental health continues to be one of the top health priorities in Monroe County.

Our coalition's vision is, "Improved mental wellness of Monroe County" and our mission is to, "Improve access to mental wellness services and reduce stigma across the generations." We have a wide range of partners on our coalition, including Monroe County Human Services, Great Rivers United Way, Monroe County Health Department, Tomah Memorial Hospital, Cities of Sparta and Tomah Police Departments, Mayo Clinic Health System, Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center, Gundersen Health System, Sparta School District, Tomah VA Medical Center, Fort McCoy, the Ho-Chunk Nation, Independent Living Resources, Wisconsin State Representative Nancy VanderMeer and various other community groups. We come together on a monthly basis to discuss issues related to mental health, strategies for addressing mental health, and to learn what other organizations are doing.

Part of our mission is to reduce stigma across the generations, and we've focused on education and having conversations about mental health. We've provided evidence-based training to professionals, community members, and front-line workers. Our goal with trainings is that professionals and community members are better-able to recognize signs that someone may be in a mental health crisis or struggling with their mental health. Trainings include: Question Persuade Refer (QPR), Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). We've also provided education, on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma-Informed Care, and mental health stigma. One success of these trainings is the ability of participants to recognize that someone may be in a mental health crisis and how to intervene and get the person help. One of the coalition members provided a QPR training to the Tomah Boys and Girls Club. About one month after the training, one of the staff members was able to identify that a child was contemplating suicide and intervene.

In Monroe County, many organizations had been trying to work on mental health on their own. This is a very challenging task as mental health is not an issue to be addressed by one single organization because it doesn't just affect one single organization. Our coalition provides support to other professionals and organizations which can become siloed in their work, so we bridge that gap by providing an opportunity for a wide-range of mental health professionals to communicate and collaborate. For example, a school counselor with Sparta School District came to one of our meetings, frustrated that she was having a hard time addressing the needs of students because of the refusal of mental health providers to communicate with her. Through our coalition, she was able to connect with partners in healthcare and get clear on what the rules and



Monroe County Health Department

Serving the Community since 1921

regulations were. As a result, she was able to open up communication between herself and mental health professionals and better meet the needs of students. Additionally, through keeping mental health at the forefront of community conversations, $\frac{3}{4}$ of Monroe County school districts have school-based mental health services, compared to $\frac{1}{4}$ when I started in 2015.

Out of our coalition we established a workgroup that is providing training, education, and support to organizations on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are an accumulation of early trauma and adverse experiences in childhood. The more ACE situations a child encounters (abuse, neglect, household challenges), the higher the risk to experience negative health and well-being as an adult. ACEs not only have an impact on mental health, but physical health as well. Trauma-Informed Care is an approach that promotes recovery and well-being by recognizing ACE symptoms and the role trauma has played in someone's life. Many organizations are becoming trauma-informed in order to better meet the needs of those whose lives have been affected by trauma. Since beginning this work in December 2018, we have reached over 320 people by providing training at Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton School District, Tomah School District, the Tomah VA Medical Center, Tomah Hospital, Gundersen Health System, Monroe County Justice Coordinating Council, and other community groups.

It is estimated that nationally we lose 22 veterans per day to suicide. Monroe County has many military veterans and active duty service members who are affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health conditions. One of our partners on this effort, the Tomah VA Medical Center, has received national recognition and funding for their success in collaborating with community partners and implementing trauma-informed care within their organization.

Part of the success of the coalition is having a designated coordinator. With tight budgets, many responsibilities, or restrictions on funding, many communities are unable to have a dedicated leader. While we do have a long way to go in addressing community mental health challenges, I am proud of the work our coalition has done. Many coalitions tend to lose membership over time and we've seen an increase in membership. Through partnership, advocacy, and education we continue to support each other's organizations and work toward creating a community that supports the mental wellness of residents and reduces stigma over the generations. I thank you for your time, and please reach out if I can be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,

Kayleigh Day, MPH, CHES
Community Health Educator
Monroe County Health Department



MONROE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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October 22, 2019

This letter is being written in support of 2019 Assembly Bill 530. As provider of mental health services to the youth of Monroe County through the Monroe County Human Services Behavioral Health Program, I see the need for mental health services for youth throughout the state of Wisconsin.

The Mental Health Coalition addresses the mental health needs of youth through suicide prevention training and stigma reduction activities.

Each year we hold a proclamation signing designating May as Mental Health Awareness Month. We bring together people representing local government in Monroe County, organizations and community citizens to recognize the importance of mental health awareness and to provide education. We have provides education on QPR (question, Persuade, Refer), Mental health Stigma and Trauma and invite speakers with lived experience to share their experience and resilience learned with our attendees.

Annually I participate in the Health and Wellness Day at the Sparta Middle School. This is an opportunity to speak to every 8th grade student as they prepare to transition to High school. At this event I am privileged to talk to them about mental health stigma, resilience and coping skills and suicide prevention. At this time I also present each one of them the information on Hopeline, the 24/7 Texting line available to anyone having struggling with mental health or suicidal issues. This is provided and supported by the Center for Suicide Awareness.

The Coalition has also provided a day log training day for all juniors in the Tomah and Norwalk School Districts. This training featured Mettie Spiess, who spoke to the students, completed training for professionals and spoke with community members on Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention.

As a provider of services to youth in Monroe County, it is clear that to be successful in reducing mental health crisis and suicide among young people; we must come together and work in a unified direction to reduce the stigma of reaching out for service. We also need to work together to use our financial resources wisely to determine how to have the greatest impact on all citizens of our county and state.

The mission of the Monroe County Department of Human Services is to serve people, with an emphasis on Monroe County residents, by Empowering participant responsibility and choice toward safe and independent lifestyles through the delivery of services in response to assessed needs.

It intends to achieve this mission through providing public awareness, resource and referral information, economic support, and direct provision of services in a fiscally responsible manner.



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To me the biggest impact of the coalition is to bring agencies and community representatives to the table to share knowledge on what services are being provided in Monroe County and where there are gaps in service.

From defining and making systemic changes, to helping each other solve service issues on a case by case basis this coalition impacts the citizens of Monroe County. We each represent a small piece of the county, but together we are proving to have the knowledge and strength to affect lasting change.

The coalition members are committed to improving the lives of all citizens of Monroe County by improving the knowledge and provision of mental health services.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Vicki Riley, LPC

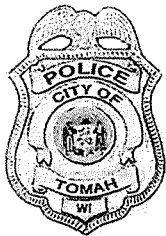
Behavioral Health Professional

CCS facilitator and CST Coordinator

Mental Health Therapist Monroe County Department of Human Services

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Mark D. Nicholson
Chief of Police

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October 22, 2019

Representative Nancy VanderMeer
Room 11 West
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Representative VanderMeer:

I recently became aware that on October 22, 2019 there will be a meeting and testimony provided in reference to Assembly Bill 530. As you are aware AB 530 is to provide funding to organizations or coalitions of organizations, including cities, villages, towns, and counties for suicide prevention programming.

I am unable to attend the meeting therefore I am providing you with this document encouraging our legislatures to support AB 530.

I have been with the Tomah Police Department for 30 years, the last 6 years as the Chief of Police. During my tenure I have often responded to and personally seen the tragedy which results from suicide. I have spoken with the families, friends, and co-workers of those that commit suicide and inevitably I am always left with one question: *What could we have done as a community to prevent this from occurring?*

There is not one solution that will answer this difficult question; there are many pieces to the puzzle. As a community we won't understand the pieces to the puzzle without sitting down with our community partners and talking.

Monroe County is doing just that through the Monroe County Mental Health Coalition. The Monroe County Mental Health Coalition was formed in 2012, after Monroe County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) selected mental health as a one

of the top health needs in the county. Our coalition brings together many community partners who are committed to improving the mental wellness of Monroe County residents. Those at the table to tackle the issues include social workers, medical professionals, law enforcement, mental health advocates, educational representatives, together with local and state legislative representatives.

The mission of the Monroe County Health Coalition is to improve access to mental wellness services and reduce stigma across generations. Our goal is to increase awareness of mental health programs and services available, provide mental health education to the community, and promote mental health events in Monroe County and surrounding areas.

The Monroe County Health Coalition is an example of what can be accomplished by other counties across the State of Wisconsin to address the mental health and suicide issues we all face. For that reason I support AB 530 and the funding it will provide for other communities to begin doing the same.

I applaud you and your legislative partners for the work you are doing in the area of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Every step you can make to provide resources to our communities in the area of mental health, to reduce the stigma that goes along with mental health, and ultimately preventing suicide is greatly appreciated at the local level.

Thank you.

TOMAH POLICE DEPARTMENT



Mark D. Nicholson
Chief of Police