

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Houghton, House Health Care Committee

FROM: Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health

DATE: 2/14/2024

RE: Follow ups to FY25 budget testimony on 2/8/24

Chair Houghton: What would it take to hire people at the Designated Agencies (DAs) to fill contracts for Success Beyond Six (SB6), to pull down federal dollars (to get to \$72 million)? Where is the fiscal gap between money that was authorized and money that was spent?

The Department of Mental Health's SB6 total spending authority is \$72M. The gap is primarily between the total contracted SB6 Medicaid and the actual spending based on service delivery. In FY23, local contracts between schools and DAs totaled \$68,088,529; it rose to \$70,773,668 in the current school year (FY24). However, the FY23 spending was \$53,510,352 based on the services the DAs were able to bill to Medicaid (\$14,578,177 difference from budgeted).

There is no clear solution for bridging the gap between the total spending authority and the actual spend. The most likely cause is the limitations on workforce, and DMH doesn't have information about the salaries and specific needs to fill the SB6 contracted positions; the DAs would be the best source of that information. If DAs were able to fill the contracted positions, the services could be provided under SB6 Medicaid and spending would likely be closer to the SB6 spending authority. Additionally, if contracts were fulfilled, it's likely that Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) would seek additional services through the DAs, which could close the gap between the contracted SB6 anticipated spending and the maximum spending authority.

DMH notes that SB6 Medicaid is an important tool in addressing student mental health needs, yet it is not the only tool needed for a robust school mental health system. Some components of a multi-tiered system of support to address social, emotional, behavioral and wellness needs would not be covered under Medicaid.

Chair Houghton: Create a list of the funding that each mental health urgent care program needs to continue running beyond March 2025, and whether or not each program is working.

Below is a list of the mental health urgent care programs and the total amount of funds DMH has committed through March 31, 2025. Each contract is funded for a different time period with end dates no later than March 31, 2025. The annual funding need for the programs as proposed is approximately \$3.8M. The projected amount needed for the remainder of FY 25 is \$488,970.

Provider	Total Contract Projection
United Counseling Service (UCS)	\$864,313
Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS)	\$663,107
Lamoille County Mental Health (LCMH)	\$489,176
Counseling Services of Addison County (CSAC)	\$517,117
Washington County Mental Health (WCMH)	\$651,105
Burlington Police Department Collaboration *	\$667,252
Howard Center/Pathways UVMMC and CHCB	\$850,000
	<u>\$4,702,070</u>

* The Burlington Police Department Collaboration does not require funding past March 31, 2025.