



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Bipartisan Support Needed for Mental Health Initiatives

*Area Republicans Seek Veto Override on Chippewa Valley Mental Health Facility,
Urge Local Democrats' Support*

MADISON – Assembly Republicans are seeking to override three of Governor Tony Evers' budget vetoes tomorrow during the Assembly Floor session; including his vetoed expansion of psychiatric beds at a Northern Regional Crisis Center in the Chippewa Valley.

As members of the Wisconsin State Legislature representing some of the estimated 29 counties that would be directly affected by this center, we write to implore our Northwestern Democrat counterparts join us in taking this override vote.

Governor Evers turned his back on our local families and law enforcement when he vetoed \$15 million in funding for this regional crisis center and redirected it towards Madison. Yet, even [Democrat Attorney General Josh Kaul acknowledges that emergency detentions are rife with transportation and location issues](#) that are detrimental to the individual, law enforcement, and the community.

Individuals in crisis, their families, and law enforcement agencies statewide would benefit from a regional crisis center. Every hour lost in travel is an hour lost for the betterment of our entire state. There are better ways for our counties to be allocating their precious time and resources than forcing local law enforcement to traverse across the state. The wait times and distance from home not only do a disservice to the individual(s) in crisis at that moment, but to every other individual in crisis who does not and cannot receive an adequate law enforcement response.

We have heard from our law enforcement loud and clear. According to a statement from Altoona Police Chief Kelly Bakken: “After testifying earlier this fall [on [AB 443/SB 405](#)] in support of the additional psychiatric beds for Northwestern Wisconsin, many people contacted me, thanking me for my support. These people were from all over the Chippewa Valley and included business owners, medical professionals, school districts, and family and friends of those in need. I have had many conversations with other law enforcement professionals who are all seeing the same mental health crisis, and who all agree adding additional mental health beds in Northwestern Wisconsin will alleviate some of the pressure hospitals all over the state are experiencing.”

This issue is bigger than politics, and Republicans and Democrats must come together to support mental health priorities for the Northwoods. All we ask is that our area legislative colleagues across the aisle put partisan politics aside, stand up for our shared constituencies, and do the right thing by supporting this measure.

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