



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Sen. James and Rep. Moses Fight to Bring Mental Health Treatment Back to the Chippewa Valley

Madison, WI— Today, the Joint Committee on Finance approved two provisions in the state budget authored by State Senator Jesse James (R-Thorp) and State Representative Clint Moses (R-Menomonie) that would grant \$10 million to Rogers Behavioral Health to establish a behavioral health hospital and \$1 million to Lutheran Social Services (LSS) to renovate and re-open the L.E. Phillips Libertas Treatment Center, bringing much-needed mental health services back to Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Senator James welcomed the news, highlighting the need for these critical services in the region.

“My colleagues and I have been working for multiple sessions to get more mental health beds in the Chippewa Valley,” said Senator James. “Following the closures of HSHS Sacred Heart and St. Joseph’s Hospitals, the Chippewa Valley lost a significant amount of their mental health bed capacity, including every juvenile bed. Not only will this partnership with Rogers restore the beds that were lost, it will also expand the services previously offered.”

Rogers Behavioral Health is a world-renowned, data-driven, non-profit mental health service provider. Rogers has proposed establishing a behavioral health hospital that would offer crisis stabilization, residential treatment, and outpatient services for both youth and adults. The Chippewa Falls facility is geographically strategic, offering accessible treatment to residents throughout Northwestern Wisconsin. “We are incredibly grateful to Senator James, Representative Clint Moses, and the Joint Committee on Finance for including this critical funding in the state budget,” said Cindy Meyer, President and CEO of Rogers Behavioral Health. “This region has long faced a shortage of accessible mental health services—especially for our most vulnerable population, our children. This investment represents a significant step forward in addressing that gap. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Governor and Legislature as this project advances, ensuring that every individual in need of mental health care receives the compassionate, evidence-based treatment they deserve.”

Last year, this region also lost critical access to substance abuse treatment services when the Libertas Treatment Center closed its doors. LSS recently acquired the old facility and has committed its renovation and re-establishment. LSS President & CEO Héctor Colón said “This grant is proof that strategic public-private partnerships can bring meaningful change to our communities. Thanks to Sen. James, Rep. Moses, and all who supported the bill, LSS can help preserve and expand behavioral health and substance use treatment in the Chippewa Valley. These

are much needed services for the community right now. LSS is ready to rise to the occasion.” Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan's mission aims to empower people to live their best lives by providing services that address addiction, mental illness, housing, family support, and more. LSS plans to open a 50-bed medically monitored and transitional residential treatment center that will serve adult men with substance abuse issues.

“Bringing these critical resources into the region is vital for the mental and physical health of Western Wisconsinites. Senator James and I have been advocating relentlessly to the Joint Finance Committee about the importance of these resources not just for our area, but for the entire state. I am excited to work with our partners, Rogers Behavioral Health and Lutheran Social Services to start up these resources in the Chippewa Valley,” said Rep. Moses. “I am happy to have contributed to a small step in revitalizing healthcare options in Western Wisconsin.”

“Mental health has always been my number one priority, and these investments are the best possible thing we can do for our community. These services won’t just benefit the residents of Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley – I expect these facilities to be essential for all the residents of Northwestern Wisconsin. I want to thank Rogers and LSS for being willing partners and look forward to working with them to provide these crucial services to our community.” Senator James added.

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