

From: frankiepedraza@yahoo.com
To: [Tony Venhuizen](mailto:Tony.Venhuizen@dainslie.sturgisgov.com); dainslie@sturgisgov.com; sturgismayor@sturgisgov.com; acs1@cdc.gov; [Tiffany Sanderson](mailto:Tiffany.Sanderson@katiehruska.com); [Katie Hruska](mailto:Katie.Hruska@markjohnston.ksenate.gov); mark.johnston@rounds.senate.gov; rob.skjonsberg@rounds.senate.gov; [Kirk Chaffee](mailto:Kirk.Chaffee@jessicamcbride.thune.senate.gov); jessica.mcbride@thune.senate.gov; [Jason VanBeek](mailto:Jason.VanBeek@thune.senate.gov); [Susan Wismer](mailto:Susan.Wismer@shawnbordeaux.com); [Shawn Bordeaux](mailto:Shawn.Bordeaux@marliwiese.com); [Marli Wiese](mailto:Marli.Wiese@paulmiskimins.com); [Paul Miskimins](mailto:Paul.Miskimins@lindaduba.com); [Linda Duba](mailto:Linda.Duba@philjensen.com); [Phil Jensen](mailto:Phil.Jensen@jointhealthandhuman.com); [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](mailto:JointHealth&HumanServicesCommittee@senator.thune.senate.gov); senator@thune.senate.gov; senator@rounds.senate.gov; [Bob Ewing](mailto:Bob.Ewing@debsoholt.com); [Deb Soholt](mailto:Deb.Soholt@heleneduhamel.com); [Helene Duhamel](mailto:Helene.Duhamel@akennecke.keloland.com); akennecke@keloland.com; [Craig Kennedy](mailto:Craig.Kennedy@tamara.stjohn.com); [Tamara StJohn](mailto:Tamara.StJohn@rhondamilstead.com); [Rhonda Milstead](mailto:Rhonda.Milstead@timrounds.com); [Tim Rounds](mailto:Tim.Round@juliefryemueller.com); [Julie Frye-Mueller](mailto:Julie.Frye-Mueller@erinhealy.com); [Erin Healy](mailto:Erin.Healy@jimstalzer.com); [Jim Stalzer](mailto:Jim.Stalzer@reddawnfoster.com); [RedDawn Foster](mailto:RedDawn.Foster@kimmalsam-rysdon.com); [Kim Malsam-Rysdon](mailto:Kim.Malsam-Rysdon@doh.info.state.sd.us); doh.info@state.sd.us; dominik.dausch@kotatv.com; [Gary Cammack](mailto:Gary.Cammack@jennifer.blake.kotatv.com)
Cc: jennifer.blake@kotatv.com; ghardy@astho.org; olx1@cdc.gov; kara.semmler@state.sd.us; [Lance Russell](mailto:Lance.Russell@ryan.cwach.com); [Ryan Cwach](mailto:Ryan.Cwach@scyller.j.borglum.com); [Scyller J. Borglum](mailto:Scyller.J.Borglum@cassandra.deffenbaugh@state.sd.us); cassandra.deffenbaugh@state.sd.us
Subject: Re: About The Sturgis Rally (Urgent!!)
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 6:38:43 PM

Dear Local & State Officials,

Governor Noem doesn't give a crap about the safety of citizens by refusing to make masks mandatory. I also blame the officials of Sturgis. This is her doing below:

https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/09/03/south-dakota-covid-19-sturgis-rally-state-fair-kristi-noem/5709042002/?utm_source=AMP&utm_medium=UpNext

Thank you for your time.

On Tuesday, August 11, 2020, 12:39:45 PM CDT, <frankiepedraza@yahoo.com> wrote:

This is the response I received from Terry Keszler, a Sturgis public official. Unacceptable.

Thank you for your time.

On Monday, August 10, 2020, 07:57:43 PM CDT, Terry Keszler <75tlk374@mail.com> wrote:

Hello Frank Pedraza, My first question is have you ever attended the rally? Do you have any idea as to the size of this event from a geographic standpoint? If you think the town of Sturgis could of postponed this event and nobody would show than you don't know the size of the event. It affects business for at least a 500 mile radius. The city tried very hard to visit with all that has become use to a piece of the pie. Everyone around us desired the rally and was inviting all to come. The city had no choice but to prepare frankly. The state has not closed anything and even had an event on July 3 with the president. No spike happened due to that event. So, to blame Sturgis is quite easy but we don't or can't control travel without the support from others. Sturgis can not block roads or anything else. We lack that authority even if we wished to do so. I understand your concerns but Sturgis has done the best it could to make this a safe rally even if we would of liked to postpone it. T Keszler

Sent: Sunday, August 09, 2020 at 4:52 PM

From: frankiepedraza@yahoo.com

To: "KOTA News" <kotanews@kotatv.com>

Cc: news@newscenter1.com, cassandra.deffenbaugh@state.sd.us, kim.malsam-rysdon@state.sd.us, aaron.hunt@sdsdstate.edu, sdgov@gov.state.sd.us, kristi.noem@state.sd.us, Nancy.York@sdlegislature.gov, Carl.Perry@sdlegislature.gov, Marli.Wiese@sdlegislature.gov, Linda.Duba@sdlegislature.gov, Erin.Healy@sdlegislature.gov, news@dakotanewsnow.com, kevin.king@dakotanewsnow.com, dohsturgisclinic@state.sd.us, JerryC@sturgisgov.com, dainslie@sturgisgov.com, DOH.info@state.sd.us, rkc68@live.com, jraanderson@live.com, gbarnier@sturgisgov.com, Martinsondavid348@yahoo.com, 75tlk374@mail.com, sturgismayor@sturgisgov.com, jessica.mcbride@thune.senate.gov, ryan_nelson@thune.senate.gov, sara_bertsch@rounds.senate.gov,

mark_johnston@rounds.senate.gov, susan.wismer@sdlegislature.gov,
arthur.rusch@gmail.com, arthur.rusch@sdlegislature.gov, phil.jensen@sdlegislature.gov,
helene.duhamel@sdlegislature.gov, reddawn.foster@sdlegislature.gov,
deb.soholt@sdlegislature.gov, kirk.chaffee@sdlegislature.gov,
gary.cammack@sdlegislature.gov, thomas.brunner@sdlegislature.gov,
akennecke@keloland.com

Subject: About The Sturgis Rally (Urgent!!)

Please read. This biker rally shouldn't have taken place due to coronavirus. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Pedraza

On Saturday, August 8, 2020, 02:31:30 AM CDT, <frankiepedraza@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear KOTA News,

I am not interested in an on-camera interview, but would like to bring this biker rally without regard for public health to your attention. You need to hold the public officials of Sturgis and South Dakota accountable for jeopardizing the health of citizens. There needs to be statewide mask and social distancing enforcement.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Pedraza

On Friday, August 7, 2020, 04:33:51 PM CDT, KOTA News <kotanews@kotatv.com> wrote:

That's a great question. We've tried to get people to speak with us on the issue. Are you interested in an on-camera interview?

Jen Blake

Executive Producer & Assignment Manager

KOTA TV & KEVN
2001 Skyline Drive
Rapid City, SD 57701
[\(605\) 394-7777](tel:6053947777)



Send news, weather & sports pictures and/or videos for on-air/digital use at <https://www.kotatv.com/ugc/>

From: Frank Pedraza <noreply@jotform.com>

Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 3:22 PM

To: KOTA News <kotanews@kotatv.com>

Subject: Re: KOTA Story Submission - Frank Pedraza



KOTA Story Submission

Name	Frank Pedraza
Email	frankiepedraza@yahoo.com
Phone Number	(605) 0000000
Story Title	About The Sturgis Rally (Urgent!)
Summary and Location	N/A
Story Text	<p>Dear KOTA,</p> <p>Why is the rally in Sturgis going to take place??! People aren't going to wear masks and social distance. They are going to contribute to the problem of coronavirus cases rising!! SHAME ON THEM!! Someone needs to be held accountable for this!</p> <p>Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.</p> <p>Mr. Pedraza</p> <p>I have read Gray Media Group Inc.'s Terms of Use and agree to those terms in full</p>
Date of Birth	09-28-1985

From: [Liz Ofstad](#)
To: [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](#); [Joint Education Committee](#); [Joint Commerce and Energy Committee](#); [Joint Ag & Natural Resources Committee](#); [Joint Local Government Committee](#)
Subject: Covid 19 Cares funds
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 7:47:46 PM

Dear Committee Members,

I am unhappy with Governor Noem's spending \$3.5M on tourism, including her \$819K ad buy running on Fox News where she is the narrator. I would like it if you would spend the funds on American families, workers and the heroic healthcare providers in the battle against the COVID-19 outbreak instead.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Liz Ofstad
3130 W 57th St Apt 304
Sioux Falls, SD 57108

From: [Kathy Lehr](#)
To: [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](#); [Joint Education Committee](#); [Joint Commerce and Energy Committee](#); [Joint Ag & Natural Resources Committee](#); [Joint Local Government Committee](#)
Subject: Constituent Input on Covid19 Cares Relief Funds
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020 8:48:06 PM

Dear SD Legislators & Committee Members,

I am a South Dakota constituent living in District 10. The Argus Leader has reported that "South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's administration announced Tuesday (9/9/20) that it is using federal coronavirus relief funds to pay for a \$5 million tourism ad campaign aimed at drawing people to the state, even as it emerges as one of the nation's top hot spots for COVID-19 infections." Noem's first ad buy, featuring herself as narrator, cost \$819,000. The Argus reports that a total of \$3,492,649 of Covid 19 Cares Relief funds has already been spent with the Department of Tourism. Yet, only \$35M has been paid out to local communities so far.

Whether or not spending this taxpayer money on tourism is legal, it certainly is unethical. The tourism expenditure of taxpayer money intended for Covid19 relief is adding to the long history of ethics problems in South Dakota. South Dakotans are hurting. South Dakota businesses are hurting. Teachers are spending their own money to build partitions in their classrooms and buying sanitizer & disinfectant wipes. Healthcare workers are risking their lives every single day caring for the sick and dying. Over 1,000 healthcare workers have died from Covid19 in the US. It's about more than having sufficient hospital beds; it's about protecting the lives of doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals. The people of South Dakota see exactly what is happening. Governor Noem is trying to shut out the voices of the SD Legislature and the people of South Dakota in order to decide herself how billions of taxpayer money is spent.

As a member of one (or more) of the five Joint Committees seeking input on how Covid19 funds are spent, I ask you to ensure no Covid19 CAREs funds are spent on tourism. Trying to lure people to South Dakota during a pandemic which is raging out of control in South Dakota when our families are hurting is wrong and fosters public distrust of our government. We should have had a mask mandate months ago and taken sensible steps to reduce the spread of Covid19, because that's what true leaders do. They lead. They don't shirk their responsibility and put the responsibility back on people. We are not a lawless state, bowing to personal responsibility & freedom that has the potential to endanger our neighbors' lives. We have laws to protect people; that is why you are in Pierre. Safety laws are not new.

We need to take sensible steps to make sure our teachers, students, healthcare workers, children, families, elderly and small businesses get the help they need. We need empathy for the sick, adequate PPE and protection for our healthcare workers & teachers, and financial help for families and small businesses. We need all levels of SD government, especially the governor, to stop prioritizing money & national attention over human lives.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lehr
8212 E Willow Glen Cir
Sioux Falls, SD 57110

From: dowhatyouwantalways@protonmail.com
To: [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](#)
Subject: Covid relief
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 12:49:48 AM

Republicans,

You need to fund our hospitals, our schools, and our taxpayers with whatever you can, we've been doing what it takes to keep society moving, now it's your turn to come through with the help we deserve!

Tax paying citizen of corrupt South Dacovid

Sent from ProtonMail mobile

From: [s speck](#)
To: [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](#)
Subject: Covid Spending
Date: Friday, September 11, 2020 9:36:46 AM

South Dakota has no greater natural resource than the citizens of this state.

The agriculture industry suffers without the people who process the food, prepare the food and serve the food. As we were reminded when disruptions at meat packing plants happened, the food chain depends upon many people in addition to farmers.

Recent news that one of the test subjects in one of the most promising vaccine tests has developed a neurological problem that could potentially be a side effect of the vaccine. This has caused a delay in that particular vaccine. What this tells us is that we cannot assume we will have vaccines by this winter and the virus could continue to thrive longer than we had hoped. We also don't know what mutations might take place. We also don't know what effect the cold weather is going to have on the virus. But we do know that people are indoors together more in winter weather.

That assumption that we might not have covid containment as soon as hoped needs to be a crucial element in spending covid funds. Directing them to balance budgets or to pre-emptively balance budgets and bolster the budget could leave the people of this state without help when they need it. While South Dakota may pride itself on operating without a deficit, deficits may have to be a forgivable reality for awhile in the pandemic world.

Flu Shots: Everyone in South Dakota needs a flu shot this year more than ever so we can prevent cases of the flu that could be confused with covid. Not only have many people who have lost their jobs lost their health insurance, there are people whose hours have been cut who might not want to spend even a small amount on a flu shot when that money could be used for groceries for their family. A fund should be set up to provide free flu shots for anyone who needs one. In addition, the state or one of the health companies could provide a mobile unit to take the free flu shots to remote locations or to areas that historically have not a lot of people who have chosen to take the flu shot. Since health care workers are also being laid off or having hours reduced, this could also provide jobs for them if they help with the program.

Covid Vaccinations: When a viable covid vaccine comes on the market, a similar plan could be used. It would seem that an action plan for vaccinations would be allowable in terms of carrying over covid funds to the next year.

Health Hotline: There are many people in this state who do not have health insurance now or cannot afford their deductibles right now. I suggest a fund be set to help them with deductibles and with medical care and other medical expenses if they cannot afford it. Having doctors taking part in a health hotline to do Zoom calls or phone consultations with anyone who needs medical attention would be a great benefit to the people of South Dakota. It should also include mental health care professionals who can help people deal with the stress of a pandemic.

Eviction and Short-Term Housing Help: There are people who have lost their jobs or businesses who are in danger of losing their homes. With winter on the way, evictions in a South Dakota winter could become a life and death issue. I would suggest a state-wide fund to pay for short-term lodging if someone gets evicted and a fund to prevent that situation. The One Sioux Falls Fund, for example, helps people pay their rent, mortgage or utility payments.

Food Bank Funds: The Food Banks are in demand now. They need resources to be sure they can provide food to their communities. Organizations such as Meals on Wheels might also need extra help.

Unemployment Help: People who have been denied unemployment are struggling and they are scared. I have even looked up the suicide prevention hotline number for someone who said he was giving up. People whose unemployment has been reduced because of the governor's decision to decline the extra unemployment money are also struggling to make ends meet. The first thing they

let go is their health insurance. How frightening do you think it is to be in the middle of a pandemic with no health insurance? Cobra is costly. Many people can't even afford the marketplace health insurance when a family might have to pay \$1000 a month or more. If you make the minimum on unemployment, \$200 for insurance can cut into your food budget. The extra \$600 a week can pay for health insurance. \$300 or \$400 can also pay the bill. So **please** convince the governor that it is in the best interests of the state to accept unemployment help.

I have heard the arguments that the extra unemployment is a dis-incentive for people to return to work. But, the truth is, most people do want to work. Please don't penalize everyone if someone has said otherwise. One problem is that employers have begun to hire people part time instead of full time so they don't have to pay benefits, especially health benefits. There are some people who are in the high risk categories who are afraid to go back to work. I know of one man who has asthma who falls in that category. Should he be penalized for wanting to live? He needs time to find a job where he is safe and the security of being able to pay his rent so he can look for something suitable. And while age discrimination is illegal, it is reality that older people are at higher risk of catching covid and are not going to high on an employer's list to hire at this time. It will take them more time to find a job.

Help with Small (very small) Business Set-Up: Being unemployed is a good time to explore the possibility of starting your own business or just starting a small sideline that can sustain you now or supplement your income if you find a part-time job. I would suggest that fees to set up companies be waived. A good use of unemployment money is to set up or plan for a small business that can operate when this pandemic is under control. I believe the state is missing opportunities to see more small businesses emerge from this pandemic. Some experts say some of the lost jobs will never come back. So people need to look for other ways to support themselves and that can be through self-employment that is sustainable through this pandemic. But even if state fees are waived, people still need to buy equipment and pay for websites to launch their business.

This brings up another point. The governor is helping businesses that make \$50,000, but what about a fund to help people who might only make \$500 or \$1000 a month in a small business? That extra income would go a long way to help them support themselves if they can only find part-time work in the pandemic employment era. And let's not forget that it could be a long-term situation if vaccines are limited or not as effective as expected. Some companies are already in their second round of lay-offs, including Daktronics.

While big businesses may be interested in coming to this state, South Dakota needs a workforce. I believe it would hurt the state to appear business friendly and employee hostile. So, please, take care of the people who don't own the big wheels, but keep the wheels turning.

Thank you for listening and holding hearings.

Best Regards,

Susan Speck

(713) 653-4291

SusanSpeck@gmail.com

From: [Melanie Andreas](#)
To: [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](#); [Joint Local Government Committee](#)
Subject: Coronavirus Assistance Funds
Date: Saturday, September 12, 2020 7:42:05 AM

Good day,

I'm reaching out to you regarding a local news story seeking constituent feedback on how South Dakota is handling the monies received to help deal with the pandemic. I couldn't find any contact information, as promised, from the TV station website, so I'm reaching out to you directly. Please forgive me if I've selected the wrong email address(es) to which I've sent.

I'm not in the least impressed with South Dakota's handling of this pandemic. I'm embarrassed to admit I live here anymore. This pains me deeply, as I truly love the Black Hills and there is nowhere on this planet I'd rather be.

Between Governor Noem's decision that South Dakotans are perfectly fine, and unemployed residents don't need any additional pandemic financial assistance, to her irresponsible handling of the pandemic, to her lackadaisical response to the astounding number of deaths, these are all things that are an embarrassment on a world-wide scale.

I'm here to offer you a snapshot of my world. I've worked in the travel industry for around 25-30 years, collectively. I was at my last job for 20 years. That was my career. I intended to retire there. I worked for Casto Travel, who was a California travel agency, enticed to open an office here in Rapid City, SD. Eventually, the Rapid City office had to close due to financial constraints, so all employees were sent home to work. I loved my job and my job loved me. Until Covid-19, the nail in my career coffin. I was furloughed on March 27, 2020.

The \$600/week unemployment benefit was a God-send. I could afford to keep my health insurance, which I thought a wise investment, considering we were/are in the midst of a global pandemic. After researching Covid-19 and its effects, I've found that I am in a high-risk group that does not statistically fare well with this virus. It is my intention, now necessity, to continue working from my home, as I've done since March, 2011. For Noem to say South Dakotans are just fine and need no additional unemployment assistance is incredibly insulting and infuriating. My career is gone. I'm of a certain age where employers are less likely to take a chance on someone of my age. I've been trying to convince prospective employers my skills are completely transferrable and that I can learn new things in a career change. The icing on the cake is, I don't have health insurance anymore. I can no longer afford \$900+/month health insurance premiums. In the midst of a pandemic, I'm without health insurance.

I'm not the only person in this predicament. I have several former co-workers who find themselves in this same uncomfortable situation. I've been looking for a new career, since April, 2020. I was still looking when it wasn't required. When I hear your Republican colleagues lambast persons in my predicament, saying the additional unemployment funds in the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program disincentivized returning to work, I can't help but be deeply offended. I would love to have a career again! You should also know, I've never collected unemployment in all my years on this

planet, until 2020 came along.

Meanwhile, I, as a tax payer, get to pay for a fence around the Governor's Mansion. I, as a tax payer, also got to pay for a bust of Mt Rushmore with the current president's mug on it. I'm sure there are other plenty of other things my money was used for that would cause additional and immense consternation, but these two issues are plenty with which to grapple, for now.

Contrary to the Governor's assessment, 'we don't need it', as a response to additional funds offered, I vehemently disagree. I put on my 'positive pants' every single day, in spite of the growing number of rejection letters I've received, in return for job applications submitted.

Might I remind you? My career is gone. The governor doesn't care. The president doesn't care. Congress doesn't care. I'm in a spot here, and I'm not sure how to get out of it. I feel a bit like a pawn in a chess game. Government's actions have shown that I, and people like me are dispensable and of little importance.

I'm reaching out to you, hoping you, as my state representatives, *you* might be interested in representing me. I'd love to hear a remedy for my predicament. Even if I were interested in taking a \$7-\$15 an hour cut in pay, there's a pandemic raging throughout this country, more specifically, raging throughout Pennington County and the surrounding area. Maybe I would have the immense good fortune of not being affected at all by the virus; statistically, this is unrealistic and a chance I can't afford to take. Logic dictates my situation would be compounded most horrifically if I did get infected. Without health insurance, I don't feel safe to even leave my home anymore.

So, I'd love to hear your guidance. What do you suggest I do? The current administration, as a whole, does not appear to be interested in doing anything to contain the virus. Noem says I don't need any financial assistance. What might you suggest I do? My lack of employment is not for a lack of trying. I'd be thrilled to enroll in a reeducation program, or something, anything, to find and fully embrace a new career. I *do* need assistance with that. Because of the current administration's public insistence this virus is no big deal, while privately acknowledging the deadliness of the virus, what used to be my career in the travel industry is not likely to return. Ever.

So now what do I do?

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Best regards,
Melanie Andreas
875A East Minnesota St
Rapid City, SD 57701
605.484.6444

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Donna Aldridge](#)
To: [Joint Health & Human Services Committee](#)
Subject: Covid 19 Cares funds
Date: Monday, September 14, 2020 9:48:46 PM

Donna Aldridge, MA, LPC, QMHP, CCTP-II
619 Mitchell Blvd
Mitchell, SD 57301

Health & Human Services Committee members

RE: Covid 19 Cares funds

Dear Committee members,

As a concerned member of the South Dakota community, I am writing to express my dismay and displeasure with the recently revealed expenditures made from the Covid 19 Cares fund. I recognize in this partisan era a belief in science places me in a minority, even though I don't personally see it as a partisan issue. The Cares fund was intended to help all of South Dakota during and after the pandemic. Perhaps funding advertising for tourism would be plausible at a later date, but not while the citizens of the state are continuing to battle unemployment, reduced working hours, inflation in purchasing necessities, possible eviction and a dearth of services to assist them with any of these things. I work everyday in the Health & Human Services field as a Community Mental Health Counselor, specializing in trauma cases as a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. I see examples of people trying to keep their heads above water every single day. Sometimes they are able to make it through that day, sometimes they aren't. The clients served by Community Mental Health agencies are often economically fragile. This was true prior to the pandemic, but I have seen this population grow to include many individuals who were previously at least making it paycheck-to-paycheck. Obviously, without a paycheck, or a cut in wages due to fewer working hours, a paycheck-to-paycheck individual or family will be pushed into economically challenged territory.

Whether our state as a whole believes it or not, the Sturgis rally has caused a ripple effect that continues to be shown in new cases of the Covid virus here, within our own state borders, as well as elsewhere in the country. Ignoring the monetary, physical, emotional **trauma** other states have suffered is one thing, perhaps not noble, but understandable. Ignoring the trauma suffered within this state is unacceptable. Rejecting the federal government's overture regarding an extension of unemployment benefits was a direct slap in the face to the population most affected by this crisis. These are people who were doing everything "right," working to support themselves and their families, and who were negatively impacted by a *natural disaster* over which they had no control. The burdens placed on individuals trying to file for and maintain unemployment are ridiculously onerous. I get to hear the fading hope from people who are trying to find new work, but who are having no success in spite of concentrated efforts. Their pain is expounded due to the cultural shame they feel for not working, and the distrust they face by the current system as well as people who

disparage them and intimate they must have done, or must be doing, something "wrong" to "deserve" their current problems. Imagine the pain, and sometimes anger, of people and their families who saw relief funds spent to draw more people into the state for tourism – especially as the state receives national negative news coverage for past irresponsible choices. Tourism = Jobs is a nice equation, but depends on much more complicated algebraic formulation that includes perception, opportunity, location, experience, access to modern technology, access to transportation, and more. Smart economists and bankers will tell you the fastest way to repair economic losses is to STOP the virus, not expose more people and continue it's spread.

Most of my professional work has been with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, including working with veterans and first responders. However, what I'm seeing currently is a present and evolving trauma that exacerbates what was experienced in the past and becomes the life or death stressor necessary to "create" a diagnosis of PTSD down the road. Hope and resilience are exponentially more difficult as the trauma continues with no end in sight, and in the face of systemic denial that the struggle is even real. This is the message to constituents regarding how Covid Cares funds were spent. It certainly doesn't help that many view the decision as personally benefitting the governor's political aspirations at the expense of those without choices.

This is a complex, multilayered issue, but the message is clear. The state needs to spend Covid Cares funds on people impacted by Covid here in South Dakota, especially those individuals who continue to be affected by this ongoing public health emergency.

I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Donna Aldridge, MA, LPC, QMHP, CCTP-II

September 16, 2020

Dear Representative Jensen and Senator Soholt:

The Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD) would appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Joint Health and Human Services Committee on the allocation of the CARES Act dollars and our continued COVID-19 response. We appreciate that the legislature has taken up this issue and is seeking input from community stakeholders. CHAD is a nonprofit member organization that serves as South Dakota's Primary Care Association, supporting Community Health Centers (CHCs) around the state in their mission to provide access to health care for all South Dakotans regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. In 2019, CHCs served nearly 80,000 patients, including 15,221 uninsured patients.

South Dakota's CHCs are a critical part of the healthcare safety net in our state, and that has been demonstrated throughout the response to COVID-19. As of September 4, 2020, CHCs have conducted over 4,500 tests in South Dakota, making COVID-19 testing available to some of the most remote and rural parts of the state and to underserved populations across the state. As the state considers spending the remaining CARES Act funds, the CHCs would encourage consideration of the following:

- **Make the proposed Small Business Grants available to non-profits.** From the information that has been shared to date about the funds that will be available to small businesses to address losses due to COVID-19, it is unclear whether non-profits will be eligible for those resources. We would encourage the state to make those funds available to non-profits as many of them have seen significant declines in revenue while – in the case of health centers – serving on the front lines of COVID-19 response.
- **Invest in increased COVID-19 testing.** With the most recent spike in COVID-19 cases, South Dakota's positivity rate has also increased (the seven-day rolling average is 11.3% as of September 14 according to the South Dakota Department of Health), indicating a need for increased testing. Health centers recognize the need for additional testing in their communities, and we anticipate that additional hot spots will emerge over the next weeks and months. We believe the state could have a positive impact on the trajectory of the pandemic in our state by offering strategic support and funding for additional testing events where needed.
- **Support a strong COVID-19 vaccine distribution effort.** Effective distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine is going to be an enormous undertaking for the state and for health care providers as we seek to stratify staff and patients into their priority tiers, consider safe storage and distribution of vaccines, undertake technology upgrades to track vaccine distribution and follow-up, address vaccine hesitancy and a range of other tasks. We would encourage the legislature to set aside adequate funds to support all aspects of vaccine distribution including the costs health care providers will incur in administering the vaccines.

As the state undertakes any of these priorities, health centers stand ready as collaborative partners to ensure COVID-19 testing and vaccination is available to the patients and communities we serve. We appreciate your consideration of our comments and would welcome the opportunity to provide testimony to the Joint Health and Human Services Committee.

Sincerely,



Shelly Ten Napel, CEO, Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas



A Place for Hope.

**BLACK HILLS
CHILDREN'S HOME**

24100 S. Rockerville Road
Rapid City, SD 57702
605.343.5422

**SIoux FALLS
CHILDREN'S HOME**

801 N. Sycamore Avenue
PO Box 1749
Sioux Falls, SD 57101
605.334.6004

CHILDREN'S INN

409 N. Western Avenue
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
605.338.0116

BRIGHT START

4402 E. 3rd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57103
605.274.0233

**CHILD ADVOCACY
CENTER**

1330 Jolly Lane
Rapid City, SD 57703
605.716.1628

**COMMUNITY BASED
SERVICES**

1330 Jolly Lane
Rapid City, SD 57703
605.343.2811
801 N. Sycamore Avenue
PO Box 1749
Sioux Falls, SD 57101
605.334.6004

OUR MISSION

We empower children,
adults, families, and
communities to be resilient,
safe, healthy, and strong.

OUR VALUES

We are better together ■
We choose kindness ■
We are tenacious ■

chssd.org

September 16, 2020

Senator Deb Soholt, Co-Chair
Representative Kevin Jensen, Co-Chair
Senator Wayne Steinhauer, Vice Co-Chair
Representative Marli Wiese, Vice Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Health and Human Services
South Dakota State Capitol
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Via E-Mail

Members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Joint Health and Human Services Committee with information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on Children's Home Society (CHS) and provide suggestions on how federal COVID-19 funds might be spent to assist us as we continue to provide residential youth services and domestic violence support during these unprecedented times.

CHS's services are focused on residential treatment and special education programs, emergency shelter and crisis intervention, forensic interviews and advocacy, adoption and foster care, nurse-family visitations and prevention education and training. We provide these services in partnership with the State to ensure these services are available, on demand, for families and children in crisis. We serve families, individuals and children, many of whom are victims of domestic violence, abuse and neglect or traumatic life events.

Thankfully, our initial direct COVID-19 expenses were relatively low. We have incurred approximately \$40,000 in COVID-19 specific expenses related to accommodating telework and IT upgrades for delivering services, personal protective equipment for direct care providers, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting and health screenings. These are costs that were not included in our planned budget. Based on our estimates for ongoing spending in these areas, we will spend another \$125,000 in expenses directly related to COVID before the end of the year. Some of these expenses are ongoing, while others are one-time expenses to position CHS to be prepared for the longer term as the pandemic continues.

The unique challenge we face as an "on demand" provider of crisis services is the lack of admissions we have seen for our programming and services in the past few months. The majority of our services provided in our residential youth program are the result of referrals from school districts who identify a youth in need due to behavioral issues or issues identified at home. With so many children not participating in school in person – especially those most likely to need our services -- we have seen our referrals for youth services diminish greatly. Likewise, we have seen diminished requests for our emergency shelter and crisis intervention for domestic violence services.

Unfortunately, the decrease in referrals and requests for our services is likely not linked to improved circumstances for these youth and families, but rather due to the reduced opportunities to identify the needs or seek services. CHS believes these decreases represent a growing pent-up demand for services that will surface in the future, likely at a more acute stage for the child or family.

In order to be prepared to meet these anticipated needs as they present and to meet the short term needs of the youth and families we are serving, CHS respectfully requests that the Committee consider allocating some of the federal COVID-19 funding for non-profit organizations that partner with the State to provide services the State would otherwise need to provide. This funding should allow for the reimbursement of the direct expenses of non-profit providers due to COVID-19. Additionally, providing bridge funding to organizations such as CHS will allow us to retain the staff and expertise necessary to meet the demand for services when that demand returns.

CHS and other non-profit organizations that partner with the State routinely experience issues with recruiting and retaining staff due to financial constraints. In a normal year, CHS experiences a high turnover of staff based on the demanding nature of the work and the challenges associated with serving the youth and families we serve. COVID-19 has exacerbated that challenge. We are currently experiencing turnover rates in excess of 50% in our direct care workers. The increased turnover is due, in part, to the added challenges COVID-19 brings in providing our services. Staff turnover means remaining staff are asked to work more hours, which in turn leads to more burnout and turnover. This is a cycle that can only be broken with additional resources to adequately pay the staff providing these critical frontline services.

Our challenge at CHS is to be prepared to meet the needs of the families, individuals and children who will need our services when they need them, while currently not having the cash flow that will support the retention of the staff needed to provide these services. Assistance with funding to make sure the non-profit provider partners can retain their staff and remain ready to serve will go a long way to making sure services are not disrupted moving forward.

I encourage the Committee to consider a non-profit grant program or a temporary rate adjustment that accounts for the costs to maintain our readiness to serve. This type of support will help ensure the State's partners remain available to provide the services our most vulnerable youth and families need on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and suggestions. And thank you for serving the citizens of South Dakota. Your commitment to service is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Michelle M Lavallee

Michelle Lavallee
Chief Executive Officer



South Dakota Association of Youth Care Providers

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

September 18, 2020

Abbott House
Mitchell

Aurora Plains Academy
Plankinton

Children's Home Society
Rapid City
Sioux Falls

Lutheran Social Services
Aberdeen
Rapid City
Sioux Falls
Spearfish

McCrossan Boys Ranch
Sioux Falls

Our Home, Inc.
Huron
Parkston

Sacred Heart Center
Eagle Butte

Sequel Transition Academy
Sioux Falls

Volunteers of America – Dakotas
Sioux Falls

Wellfully
Rapid City

Committee Members:

On behalf of the SD Association of Youth Care Providers we are providing this information to you as testimony for support of Cares Act dollars being directed towards our education systems. While our education programs might be operated by local districts, we still have been impacted by increased staffing during time when schools were closed, IT equipment to support virtual learning or other increased staffing/tutors to cover new ways of getting educational services to youth in care. If funds were available: more could be done to make environmental adjustments i.e. plexi-glass dividers, air purification systems etc.. Resources have also been stretched thin in the non-educational aspects of programs to protect the youth we serve 24/7 with being ultra-cautious to assure that staff have the protection they need as well as to protect agencies from all types of illness operating on a principle of if you're sick stay home, again increasing staffing costs to cover more staff calling into work out of necessity for the safety of the youth we serve as well as their own family impacts.

Each agency serving youth in their own unique capacities tracked the impact of Covid in the ways that they viewed it impacting their agencies the most. Attachments have been included to provide an overview of just some of the agencies within our Association. As the current president of the Association, I have visited with all of the agencies and each has risen to the unique situations and challenges that Covid has presented.

Respectfully,

Jenise Pischel, MSE
President
SD Association of Youth Care Providers

Attachments

Abbott House			
			Lost Revenue
Foster Care			
Ohitika Home July	134 days of lost capacity x \$161.63		\$21,658.42
Nesheim Home	124 days of lost capacity x \$161.63		\$20,042.12
ILPP Ohitika	31 days of lost Capacity x \$103.36		\$3,204.16
Nesheim Home	31 days of lost capacity x \$103.36		\$3,204.16
Total Bridges			\$48,108.86
Residential PRTF			
Early Discharge	61 days of lost capacity x \$258.87		\$15,791
Delayed Admit	31 days of lost capacity x \$258.87		\$8,024.97
quaranteen days	42 days at \$528 per day		\$22,176.00
Total PRTF			\$45,992
			\$12,000
Total Additional Expenses			\$106,100.83

Additional Expense

McCrossan Boys Ranch

Residential Programs	Delayed/Lost placements during shut down	Lost Revenue
Group Care	155 days x 5 residents x \$164.27/day	\$127,309.25
Alternative Services	155 days x 1 residents x \$164.27/day	\$25,461.85
Transitional Services	155 days x 2 residents x \$117.40/day	\$36,394.00
ILPP Services	155 days x 2 residents x \$103.36/day	\$32,041.60
Total	*We were shutdown 3/22/20 to 8/24/20=155 days	\$221,206.70
Other		Lost Revenue
Donations (no events incl.)	\$ down comparing April-Aug. 2019 to 2020	\$50,192.00
Fundraising Events	2 Cancelled/1 postponed -\$ down from other years average	\$64,000.00
Total		\$114,192.00
Additional Expenses		Additional Expense
On-Campus Paid Jobs	Transitional residents given paid jobs on campus since they couldn't get jobs during Shutdown 22 weeks @\$400/wk	\$8,800.00
PPE Supplies/Seramist Disinfecting	by Intek/Sanitizing Supplies	\$18,000.00
		\$362,198.70

**Our Home, Inc. Expense Comparison's Related to Covid 19
Programs Affected: Rediscovery, ASAP/PRTF-Huron and PRTF/Parkston**

Time frame: 02-01-2019 to 08-31-2019

Cleaning Supplies

All Programs: \$41,049.00

Time frame: 02-01-2020 to 08-31-2020

All Programs: \$46,490.65

Difference: +\$5441.65

Medical Supplies July 2019 over July 2020 Comparisons:

Increase: +\$341.50

Overtime: 2020

Qtr 1: (Jan, Feb, March) 2832.49 hours for costs of \$62,519.40

Qtr 2: (Apr., May, June) 2102.10 hours for total costs of \$46,150.46

Qtr 3: (July, August-) 2381.08 hours for total costs of \$54,305.98

*Our Home, stopped admissions on March 17th through May 11, 2020 to allow for isolation bed space and in the unknown for staff shortages

* As we became more aware of ways to manage Covid as we gained insight and perspective on the virus, titrating our admissions slowly.

* When school ended in May, successful discharges left our program, each admission had to be spaced out safely to allow for quarantine time.

*Our numbers will be impacted in September as we had our first experience with Isolation and Quarantine of youth, the use of PPE and cleaning chemicals during that time has yet to be calculated.

Sacred Heart Center - Comparison from 2019-2020 (Group Care)			
	Occupancy	Occupancy Drop	Loss of Income
March 2019	67.50		
March 2020	50.60	16.90%	11454.55
April 2019	76.50		
April 2020	51.70	24.80%	19164.95
May 2019	71.80		
May 2020	38.70	33.10%	26412.2
June 2019	84.00		
June 2020	38.10	45.90%	31620.74
Loss of Income			88652.44
We have had an increase in costs due to purchasing PPE products and cleaning products			
We did incur employee costs due to the spring school closure and keeping ratio			
We will have an increase in costs of employment due to virtual school/ tutor position			

Federal Applications for CARES Direct Funding Layout

Federal Reimbursement is Capped at 2% of Annual Revenue For the Division

LifeScape COVID-19 Cost and Reimbursement Recap	
YTD August 31, 2020	
Children's Services	
Net Outpatient Revenue Lost	\$ (793,803)
Net Children's ICF Revenue Lost	\$ (447,585)
PPE Costs	\$ (58,223)
Hazard Pay	\$ (3,956)
COVID Positive Team	\$ (21,351)
Outpatient Screening	\$ (20,683)
Total Direct YTD COVID Expenses	\$ (1,345,601)
State Supported COVID Funding	\$ -
Paycheck Protection Program - Not Qualified	\$ -
Direct CARES Fund Reimbursements	\$ 555,049
Net YTD COVID Impact	\$ (790,552)
Adult Services:	
Net Adult Services Revenue Lost	\$ (524,751)
PPE Costs	\$ (74,802)
Off-site COVID Positive Location	\$ (126,661)
Hazard Pay	\$ (28,162)
COVID Positive Team	\$ (49,819)
Total Direct YTD COVID Expenses	\$ (804,195)
State Supported COVID Funding	\$ -
Paycheck Protection Program - Not Qualified	\$ -
Direct CARES Fund Reimbursements	\$ -
Net YTD COVID Impact	\$ (804,195)
LifeScape Net YTD COVID Impact	\$ (1,594,746)