



## Testimony in Favor of Funding LD:1714

February 22, 2024

Esteemed Members of the Appropriations and Taxation Committees,

My name is Kelly Cookson. I am the Director at Save a Life Recovery Resource Center in Lincoln and a person who has been impacted by substance use disorders. Like many of us testifying in support of funding LD 1714 today and perhaps some of you, I have lost many loved ones to the disease of addiction. I have also experienced the joy of watching countless people find their recovery, including my daughter.

Save a Life offers activities that benefit our whole community such as support groups for people with substance use disorders and their loved ones, support for high-risk youth, one-on-one recovery coaching, grief support, comprehensive harm reduction, our greenhouse to help those who are food insecure, and much more. Now that we are in our third year of having a building, we are established and growing but the money remains unchanged. I honestly don't know how we are able to offer all that we do on our budget. What I do know is that it will not be sustainable for very long.

Our center is located in a building that is almost 100 years old. We have a very dated and inefficient propane heat source, making the building uncomfortably cold most of the year. Our floors are buckling and need to be replaced as they are a safety hazard. The plumbing is ancient and we recently had a blockage that forced us to rent a portapotty to be able to stay open while we waited days for the work to be done. We aren't sure yet what the final bill will be for the repairs that were absolutely necessary. We don't have any electronic record system so everything is done on paper and is time-consuming, especially for 2 part time staff members, myself included. We have an entire basement space we cannot use because we can't afford the egress that is required.

The current \$50,000\$ a year we get from DHHS is about a quarter of our yearly operating costs. That is the only sustainable funding stream that Save a Life currently has. We are potentially one more costly repair away from having to close our doors. I doubt our center is the only one in a similar situation. If we had to close, it would lead to thousands of people in our rural, low income area with no other local option for many of these lifesaving services.

By prioritizing funding for LD 1714, you will ensure that rural and smaller centers like Save A Life can continue to provide these vital services. Please consider the implications on all your constituents if this funding is not approved. I am respectfully asking that you fund LD 1714.

I thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Kelly Cookson  
Director, Save A Life Recovery Resource Center

