



# BIG STONE COUNTY MINNESOTA

FAMILY SERVICES

February 7, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is written with the intent to support the per diem increase request for Big Stone County, specifically in the ICF/DD facility Monarch Heights.

We are county social workers employed by Big Stone County, and we both serve clients who are living at Monarch Heights here in Ortonville, MN. It is important to note that we serve clients across the state, some reside in group homes and others in their own residence, and we work with many different types of providers to implement services for these folks to be as independent and healthy as possible in their daily activities. Of all the providers we work with in many different settings, we feel the staff at Monarch Heights provide some of the best quality care out there, despite the lack of proper funding and support for their program. This facility is a huge asset to our community and the people it serves. Big Stone County lacks providers in many areas—housing, transportation, home maker etc., so it is very important that we do our best to not lose our current options. Keeping facilities like Monarch Heights open is essential to continue to meet the needs of our folks in Big Stone County. We want to see Monarch Heights as a lasting residential and treatment option for the people of our community for years to come.

It is also important to note cause and effect in a situation like this. Monarch Heights serves 11 individuals in the home, but these 11 individuals also attend a day program at our local DT&H facility, Main Street Industries. Should Monarch Heights need to close because of funding, these 11 individuals will not only be left without housing, but Big Stone County's DT&H program Main Street Industries will have lost eleven of its 27 consumers. If Main Street Industries loses a significant amount of its consumers, it too may be looking at closing. This would in turn effect other consumers living in other group homes in the county. In our small community, we truly do rely on all pieces to come together to complete the big picture, and one seemingly small closure will ultimately have drastic effects on not only other individuals, but on other county programs as well.

Quality care is extremely hard to come by these days. There is a lack of staffing and lack of resources amongst most providers. We beg you to truly consider the benefits of having Monarch Heights remain an ICF/DD facility in Big Stone

340 2<sup>nd</sup> ST NW, PO Box 338  
Ortonville, MN 56278  
(320) 839-2555  
Fax: (320) 839-3966  
TDD: 1-800-676-3777  
[www.BigStoneCounty.gov](http://www.BigStoneCounty.gov)

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer

24 HOUR EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH NUMBER 1-800-992-1716



# BIG STONE COUNTY MINNESOTA

FAMILY SERVICES

County; not only the level of care that they provide, but the quality of care that backs their services. Proper funding is needed to ensure that the right staff are hired and given the proper training to provide these services, and it is important to note that the folks residing at Monarch Heights live with higher needs than most. It is for the reasons listed above that we write to request the per diem increase for this facility.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "BOBBIE OAKES".

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Arndt".

Bobbie Oakes and Amanda Arndt  
County Social Workers, Big Stone County Family Services

340 2<sup>nd</sup> ST NW, PO Box 338  
Ortonville, MN 56278  
(320) 839-2555  
Fax: (320) 839-3966  
TDD: 1-800-676-3777  
[www.BigStoneCounty.gov](http://www.BigStoneCounty.gov)

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer  
24 HOUR EMERGENCY MENTAL HEALTH NUMBER 1-800-992-1716