



Dear Health and Human Services Committee,

Nebraska Cures has been a leading advocate for health science research for over 20 years. We support policies rooted in science and strive to advance the quality of life and economy for Nebraskans. In alliance with our mission, we strive to educate policymakers on medical research and health related public policy.

I am writing to express our support of LB 255 and the expansion of problem solving courts. In October, Nebraska Cures partnered with NAMI Nebraska to hold the Nebraska Mental Health Policy Convening, a first of its kind event designed to bring together stakeholders and individuals with lived experience to develop a comprehensive policy agenda to improve the mental health of Nebraskans.

At the convening, five policy priorities emerged, the first of which is creating mental health courts around the state. I'm sharing a short policy brief with the committee.

We recognize that in order to have successful mental health courts, you also need local service available to support the courts. The fall convening launched a Nebraska Mental Health Study that is currently being conducted by Category One Consulting. They are doing extensive research, interviewing 100s of stakeholders and surveying 500 people with lived experience in order to map out our continuum of care in Nebraska and make recommendations on improvements.

We hope this information can be used by the legislature and other policy leaders to build the infrastructure to improve not just treatment of mental illness and addiction in those touched by the justice system, but to Nebraskans at large. All families are increasingly facing mental health struggles whether it is their kids, friends, or colleagues.

We urge the legislature to consider taking a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to mental health reforms and expand successful programs like problem solving courts. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda McGill Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda McGill Johnson

Nebraska Cures Executive Director