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67th Legislative Session

House Appropriations-Human Resources Division

Chairman Nelson and members of the Committee:

I am Jean Herauf, a speech-language pathologist from Dickinson. I am a certified brain injury specialist and a member of the North Dakota Brain Injury Advisory Council. I have been a practicing SLP since 1981, with most of my experience and passion being in providing service to those with brain injury.

I wish to provide testimony regarding my concerns as they relate to the proposed budget reduction for brain injury in the Human Services budget. The brain injured population has many needs which I feel are still unmet, particularly for those of us in rural areas and in western ND. The North Dakota Brain Injury Network has been a lifeline for many brain injury survivors, family members and care givers, and providers such as myself. I have reached out to them on many occasions, and have also referred patients who feel they have nowhere to go. NDBIN has done a wonderful job of increasing awareness, providing education, providing evaluations and connecting patients and families with resources. Educating the public (schools, ER and family practice physicians, first responders) is another key piece to furthering the match of brain injured individuals with services. Without identification, many of the injured go undiagnosed and thereby unserved. NDBIN has been instrumental in the education of the public.

We have a long way to go, but I feel we are finally on a good path to better meet the needs of the brain injured population in ND. This role cannot be met through Medicaid funding because of the unique role NDBIN plays to be the information hub available for all individuals and providers to access information and resources.

I wish to respectfully request that you restore the brain injury funding in HB 1012 including the proposed 50% reduction in funding the North Dakota Brain Injury Network. Thank you for your time and serious consideration of this matter. I would be happy to discuss this or answer any questions any of you may have in regard to my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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