

Dear House Appropriations Committee Members,

I am Janna Pietrzak, Quality Programs Manager for the American Heart Association. Over the past two years I have had the privilege of working closely with the North Dakota Brain Injury Network team in developing resources and tools to assist stroke survivors in their journey to recovery. This partnership was made possible due to 2019 legislation which revised the North Dakota Century Code definition of brain injury to encompass all types of acute brain injuries, including stroke.

In my 20 years of experience as a registered nurse, I have seen first-hand the devastating effects that a sudden brain injury can have on survivors and their loved ones. Many brain injury survivors experience cognitive or physical deficits that significantly impact quality of life. These individuals can benefit greatly from the educational events, support groups and referral assistance programs offered by the ND Brain Injury Network. This is especially true in rural areas of the state, where services may be difficult to locate. Because of this, I implore your support in restoring the House Bill 1012 brain injury funding, including the proposed 50% decrease in North Dakota Brain Injury Network funding. A reduction in these important services would certainly have a detrimental effect on many current and future brain injury survivors.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to voice my endorsement of restoring brain injury funding in House Bill 1012. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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