



**2021 HB 1354**  
**House Human Services Committee**  
**Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman**  
**February 2, 2021**

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Melissa Hauer, General Counsel of the North Dakota Hospital Association. I testify regarding 2021 House Bill 1354 and ask that you give this bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

The bill would create a Commission on Guardianship to develop and monitor a process for state-funded guardianship services for individuals determined by a court to be eligible for services in accordance with the standards and policies of the commission. The bill would provide a continuing appropriation for these guardianship services.

This bill is a step in the right direction to creating a more organized and comprehensive system to help vulnerable adults in need of guardianship services. With increasing frequency, hospitals encounter patients who need someone to make medical decisions for them, but because the patient does not have a power of attorney or any family or friends who are willing or able to make those decisions, the only resort is to ask a court to appoint a guardian. We believe this situation is only going to increase due to our aging population and more mobile society where people lose touch with family members who may live thousands of miles away.

To tell you more about the bill and why it is important for hospital patients, I would like to introduce Maggie Seamands, a registered nurse and board-certified case manager at Sanford Health in Bismarck. We ask that you give this bill a Do Pass recommendation. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have before I turn it over to Maggie. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Hauer, General Counsel  
North Dakota Hospital Association