

Good morning Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Alicia Belay and I serve as the Public Health Specialist in the Health Equity Office of the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH). I am here to support Senate Concurrent Resolution 4002 which declares September 23, 2021 as Fourth Trimester Care Day in North Dakota.

Improving postpartum care has been identified as a state Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Grant Program priority by the North Dakota Department of Health. This MCH priority is specifically focused on early identification of postpartum depression and enhancing insurance coverage during the critical postpartum period.

According to the 2017-2018 North Dakota Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), almost 30% of women reported not attending a postpartum visit. This data also indicates that over 15% of women in North Dakota experience postpartum depression. This increases to 24% for American Indian women.

Maternal care doesn't end with birth. Postpartum visits are critical for the detection of postpartum depression and other medical conditions. Recognizing a fourth trimester in North Dakota would highlight the importance of this care and elevate awareness among health care professionals and the public.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.