

Dear Madam Chairman and Members of the Human Services Committee:

I have been practicing Internal Medicine in Fargo, ND since 1983, prior to that in Mpls/St Paul since 1977

I Graduated from the NDSU of Pharmacy, UND school of Medicine, and University of Minnesota

I performed a Residency at Abbott Northwestern Hospital/University of Minnesota in internal medicine

I have been a patient advocate for the last 44 years and have first hand seen the value of continuity of care in peoples lives and I support HB 1465,s efforts to ensure patients can chose their health care provider.

I have personally experienced different health care structures from my time in Minneapolis, with the birth of the HMO's, PPO's and all their variations, and each struggle to enhance patient care, and many times they work to the contrary

What is the rationale for restricting patient access? Is it to improve healthcare? No. These platforms are designed to restrict patient choice, so that patients are unable to change from a health care system so the patients are referred within the system to the high reimbursement areas, e.g. cardiology, CV surgery, general surgery, interventional radiology, and the hospital itself.

Patients deserve to choose their health care provider, as long as the provider meet the terms and prices of the insurance plan. As an independent physician I am not bound to refer to a particular system. I can chose the best provider for my patient, regardless of the system, and after 44 years I know who they are, the same physicians I or my family would see. Why is that important, good doctors have good outcomes, and deliver by far the most cost effective care.

I support this bill because, I think it will help maintain continuity, and provide good care for my and other primary care patients

Aa a former pharmacist, I am familiar with the attempts by the State of North Dakota be keep pharmacists in charge of the pharmacies, and not the store manager for a large chain, I think this is a good thing because I know they also care about their patients.

I think large institutions in the state do deliver good medical care, and I think working in collaboration with the independent providers in the state would only make that care better. I see no good medical reason why patients should be restricted from the provider of their choice. Having independent practices creates more competition, I am happy to compete for patients on the basis of service and good care, and that should be everyone's goal, without barriers.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill

Mike Lillestol, MD