

**House Education Committee
Representative Pat Heinert, Chair
March 11, 2025
SB 2286**

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee: My name is Todd Schaffer and I serve as Sanford Health Bismarck President/CEO. By way of background, I am from Carrington, completed a pharmacy degree at North Dakota State University and then completed my medical degree at the University of North Dakota. After completing my residency in family medicine at Altru Health System in Grand Forks, I was a family medicine physician in Carrington before being recruited to Sanford Bismarck 10 years ago, moved into administration five years ago and have served as President/CEO for the last three years.

Sanford Health supports SB 2286 and we respectfully ask that you consider restoring the original bill's funding request. The purpose of the funding is construction of a much-needed addition to the UND School of Medicine to create a health professions collaborative facility and expand workforce development capacity.

I would like to specifically speak in support of the simulation center and the opportunity to train a healthcare workforce that not only understands how to care for patients, but also knows how to collaborate and communicate with one another to ensure patient safety.

Creating a culture of safety is fundamental to delivering high-quality care and improving outcomes. It requires a complex mix of strategies, practices and systems designed to minimize risk, reduce errors and enhance the quality of care. At the core of this mission is teamwork, collaboration and open communication.

At Sanford Health, a major part of our journey to become a highly reliable organization – meaning we prioritize high-quality, safe care for patients on a routine basis – is teamwork at every level of the organization. As an example, we train every member of our healthcare team to be able to have conversations to stop the line, so to speak, when they see unsafe acts. A key component to our success is reducing the power gradient that has traditionally existed between doctors and other members of the healthcare team.

An example of this training in action: A certified nurse assistant (CNA) who was delivering supplies into a surgery room noticed the patient was being prepped on the wrong side. She was a new employee – it was actually her first day on the job; the medical leader in the surgical room was a veteran neurosurgeon. Because of our safety training, the CNA had the courage to speak up and share her concern. The surgeon stopped the team to consider the CNA's comments and realized it was indeed the

wrong side. The team-based safety training allowed us to avoid a serious surgical error and saved the patient from having to endure a second surgery.

The simulation center will be designed to provide this training by creating a training environment where nurses and therapists and healthcare technicians work alongside physicians. This environment is crucially important to help medical providers develop the relationship and critical thinking skills to be able to stop the line and say this is not safe.

Simply put, the simulation center will improve the medical school's ability to train a highly qualified workforce that is ready to take care of patients in the communities we serve.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you might have.

Todd Schaffer, M.D.
Sanford Bismarck President/CEO
Todd.Schaffer@SanfordHealth.org
701-650-8999