



Minnesota - North Dakota Chapter

Testimony
Senate Bill 2138
Human Services
Rep Matthew Ruby, Chair
March 17, 2025

Good morning Chair Ruby and members of the committee. My name is Melanie Gaebe and I am the North Dakota Public Policy Director for the Minnesota-North Dakota Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. I am here to provide testimony in support of SB 2138.

On the previous bill, I spoke about the importance of the relationships we have with providers across the state. Community of Care is one such relationship. The work they do in rural Cass to allow residents to stay in their communities safely for as long as possible is not just a benefit to the dollars and cents of providing care, they are providing the opportunity for people who need a bit of help to maintain their dignity and quality of life in the community they know and love.

We know in dementia care that moving a person living with dementia away from the familiar and into an unknown location is likely to speed the rate of their cognitive decline. I think about the services Community of Care provides in rural Cass and can't help wondering how many more years grandma could have stayed in her home if there had been services available in rural Morton over 20 years ago. I don't think it is possible to overstate the impact on a person's behavioral and mental health when they don't have a choice in where they live. As negative as the impacts are when removing choice, we can see positive impacts when people are able to make that choice.

I support the requested increase for Community of Care, not only for the services they provide in rural Cass but also for the excellent model they provide for every other county where people see the need but don't know what steps to take next.