

Testimony on Solutions for Financial Challenges in Basic Care

Senate Appropriations-Human Resources Division

March 18, 2025

HB 1012

My name is Kelly Gustavson, and I am the Social Worker for the Mountrail Bethel Home and Mountrail County Medical Center, in Stanley, ND. I am also the President of ND Long Term Care Social Workers.

Before coming to my current job in Stanley, 13 years ago, I worked Home and Community Based Services in both Williams and Ward Counties. I continue to believe that Home and Community Based services are needed and important, however, when someone is needing 24-hour care or has complex medical needs, then placement of some sort is needed.

Regarding Basic Care especially, this is something that is a great need, especially for those who are unable to afford Assisted Living or may meet the requirements to live in a nursing home, especially if Long Term Care Medicaid is the method of payment. Basic care is a service that is widely used in our State and if not available, where will these people go? Many individuals living in Basic Care require 24/7 assistance. However, our region lacks a sufficient number of Qualified Service Providers (QSPs) and Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) providers to offer consistent support. Some residents have already attempted to receive care through HCBS but found it inadequate, while others require more assistance than what is available in the community.

The idea of discontinuing Basic Care as a service is something I find very frightening. My residents currently in our Basic care have sold their homes, and would have nowhere to go, to remain in our area. They also would then be looking at moving away from families, friends, their own community, and churches. Affordable housing options, across the state, especially in Western ND, are limited and often not in the price range for those needing assistance in their home. Basic Care offers those who need minimal assistance to have that provided while keeping some of their independence and having help when it is needed, not when someone can be scheduled.

Please continue Basic Care and honor the request of the North Dakota Long Term Care Association for the improved inflators, expanding the margin, and continue the \$5 a day add on for property.

I welcome any calls or emails about this matter, to help explain better why Basic Care is a service that is vital for many people in N.D.

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