

## Legislative Support for North Dakota Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse at the ND Center for Nursing (Amendment to SB 2018)

### ND CENTER FOR NURSING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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agencies, nursing  
programs and others

“Due to a major shortage of health care staffing, the state’s hospitals have a severe lack of available beds. Rising COVID-19 hospitalizations and high non-coronavirus admissions, some resulting from residents who deferred health care earlier in the pandemic, have caused a crunch on medical centers.” Grand Forks Herald November 10, 2020.

If we learned anything from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that North Dakota does **not** have a centralized, coordinated effort to provide for adequate nurse staff across the state. Nursing forms the foundation for the economic engine for North Dakota’s communities. Currently, health care facilities spend MILLIONS of dollars contracting with out of state agencies to secure travel and contract nurses, huge opportunity for these dollars to stay in ND.

“Something needs to be done about retention of staff. Currently, I know of 7 ICU nurses that left their positions in Bismarck to take traveling positions to Fargo and 7 Fargo nurses that have left Fargo to go to Bismarck for different jobs. ND has a constant churning of nurses.” ND Practicing Nurse, 2020

“Nurses are burning out due to chronic nursing shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.” ND Nurse Administrator, 2020

“Nurses are heavily recruited by out-of-state recruiters. ND should provide more detailed resources promoting in-state jobs if they would like us to stay here.” ND Nursing Student, 2020.

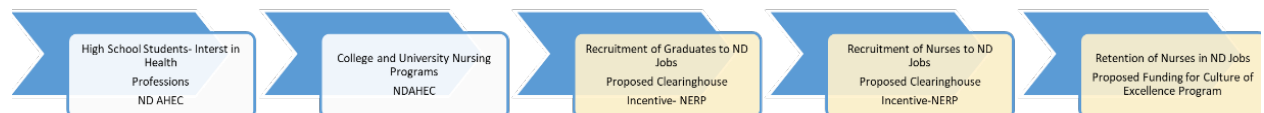


The North Dakota Center for Nursing requests an amendment to the ND Department of Commerce budget (SB 2018) to reallocate \$140,000 of the previously appropriated Nonresident Nurse Employment Recruitment Program funding for the establishment of the ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse and support the Culture of Excellence program at the ND Center for Nursing during the 2021-2023 biennium.

The ND Center for Nursing is uniquely positioned to develop and implement an innovative comprehensive strategy to address the state’s nursing shortage in rural areas.

Two goals for ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse:

- **Recruit** nurse graduates and nurses for health care employment in ND.
- **Retain** nurses in ND, and in the workplace decrease staff turnover.



## Key Components of ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse

- Will be based on extensive ND Center for Nursing data showing the need for increased recruitment and retention.
- Target all levels of nurses: Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), Registered Nurses (RN), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Nursing Faculty
- Is a unique opportunity for nursing education programs and employers to work together to keep ND students in North Dakota.
- **Recruit nurse graduates and nurses for health care employment in ND.**  
Provide career services to nursing students by connecting them with local communities and employment opportunities. Connect employers and graduating nurses directly together to get them to the bedside in rural and urban ND. We will work to connect students to NNERP and other incentive programs to increase the uptake. In a recent survey of graduating nurses, **38%** plan to work outside of North Dakota and they are heavily recruited from out of state agencies.

**Develop a flexible staffing model** through collaborative work with health care employers, graduating students, practicing nurses and education programs to provide increased opportunities for unique staffing patterns to better meet the needs of nurses (i.e., hours, shifts, travel vs. permanent).

- **Retain nurses in their workplace and in ND and decrease turnover.**  
Increase retention of nurses through the ND Nursing Culture of Excellence Designation program which is designed to improve the workplace culture and support the formation of professional identity in nursing. In a recent survey of practicing nurses, **48%** indicated that they plan to leave North Dakota.
- Will add a critical component to existing ND Department of Commerce workforce programs to fill the gap of direct recruitment and retention of nurses to ND.

**Fiscal Note:** Funding is needed to support the ND Center for Nursing infrastructure and to fully develop the ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse and the Culture of Excellence program. It is anticipated that these will be fully developed during the 2021-2023 biennium which will help provide sustained funding for all the ND Center for Nursing activities. A version of this plan was included in SB 2198 which failed in the Senate.

**Total State Appropriations for 2021-2023= \$140,000 from carry-forward funding**

The North Dakota Center for Nursing, a non-profit 501c3 organization, was developed in 2011 to represent over 20,000 nurses and over 40 nursing organizations across North Dakota. The mission of the North Dakota Center for Nursing is through collaboration guide ongoing development of a well-prepared and diverse nursing workforce to meet health care needs in North Dakota through research, education, recruitment and retention, advocacy and public policy. This policy agenda has been approved by our Board of Directors and is an official policy of the North Dakota Center for Nursing.

*Contact: Patricia Moulton Burwell, PhD at [patricia.moulton@ndcenterfornursing.org](mailto:patricia.moulton@ndcenterfornursing.org)*

Tessa Johnson  
President  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Patricia Moulton Burwell  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Dear ND Center for Nursing:

March 9, 2021

I am writing this letter to support the ND Center for Nursing proposed amendment to SB 2018: ND Department of Commerce Budget. This amendment would allocate \$140,000 of the carry-forward funding of the Nonresident Nurse Employment Recruitment Program for the establishment of the ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse and to support the Culture of Excellence program.

Nurse staffing is in crisis in North Dakota, especially with the pandemic, and North Dakota emergency nurses have felt the impact of this firsthand. Beyond the added strain of COVID-19, emergency nurses face increased 'inpatient boarding' (patients admitted to the hospital, but remaining in the ED due to the lack of an inpatient nurse to care for them), increased nurse-to-patient ratios – especially for critically ill patients in the ED, and a constant churn of travel nurses in and out of the facilities, leading to unpredictable numbers of nurses to care for our patients.

There is a critical need for a centralized, coordinated effort to provide nurse staffing across the state. This is paired with the need for increased awareness and recruitment of future nurses to replace burned out nurses, an increased focus on recruiting ND nursing students to work in ND, the development of a centralized contract nursing staffing pool with flexible staffing options, and the need to ensure that the work environment provides a positive workplace culture to ensure retention.

I support the ND Center for Nursing proposed amendment because the Center has a strong reputation of bringing North Dakota's nurses together to solve challenging problems, has an existing framework upon which to develop an effective solution, and is committed to changing the way staffing is addressed within our state. This is North Dakota's opportunity to not only address our own nurse staffing crisis, but to serve as a model that states throughout the country will follow in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Adam Johnston, BAN, RN, CEN, CPEN, NPD-BC  
2020-2021 State Council President  
North Dakota Emergency Nurses Association  
862 36<sup>th</sup> Ave E, Apt 110  
West Fargo, ND 58078

Audrey Charchenko  
Rasmussen University Fargo  
4012 19th Ave S.  
Fargo, ND 58103

March 8, 2021

Tessa Johnson  
President  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Patricia Moulton Burwell  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

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I support the ND Center for Nursing in receiving the carry-forward funding of \$140,000 to establish the ND Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse.

*Audrey Charchenko*

Audrey Charchenko, DNP, RN  
Associate Dean of Nursing  
Rasmussen University-Fargo ND  
audrey.charchenko@rasmussen.edu

March 10, 2021

Tessa Johnson  
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North Dakota Center for Nursing  
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Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
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I support the ND Center for Nursing in their efforts to combat the nursing shortage in North Dakota. I have felt the stress and struggles of not being able to fill nursing positions in my facility and have watched the stress the extra work has put on my current nurses. We need help now!!

Jodi Hovdenes  
VP of Patient Care Services  
CHI St. Alexius Health Carrington  
jodihovdenes@catholicealth.net

**Center for Rural Health**

School of Medicine & Health Sciences  
Suite E231

1301 North Columbia Rd Stop 9037

Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037

Phone: 701.777.3848

Website: ruralhealth.UND.edu

March 9, 2021

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President  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Patricia Moulton Burwell  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Dear ND Center for Nursing:

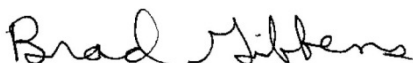
The Center for Rural Health (CRH), UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, as the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) and the Program Office for the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) can support your effort to use Department of Commerce Carry Forward funds to address nursing supply and demand issues. The Center for Rural Health does employ a Workforce Specialist, supported with state appropriation, who works to assist rural communities with a range of health workforce needs (e.g., medical providers, nursing, allied health, administrative, and others). It is my understanding that this legislation is not duplicative of what is already occurring and that it can augment current efforts. The nursing situation is indeed complicated and multiple partners collaboratively working to address it may produce more benefits for North Dakota. The travel nurse pool idea is distinct.

Nurses are the largest health professional category in ND and are vital to the continuation of access to necessary health services in rural and tribal communities. Especially during a pandemic we have seen the critical importance of nursing. Nurses keep our rural hospitals and clinics open, providing high quality care. Our rural hospitals were hit hard during the height of the pandemic and most were placed in a position where they had to expend scarce funds to secure the services of agency nursing.

There is a critical need for a centralized, coordinated effort to provide nurse staffing across the state. This is paired with the need for increased awareness and recruitment of future nurses to replace burned out nurses, an increased focus on recruiting ND nursing students to work in ND, increased recruitment of out-of-state and international nurses, the development of a centralized contract nursing staffing pool and the need to ensure that the work environment provides a positive workplace culture to ensure retention.

The Center for Rural Health supports your efforts to continue to build constructive workforce solutions, and we look forward to working with you to determine a common strategy.

Sincerely,



Brad Gibbens, Acting Director and Assistant Professor



# Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd

1226 First Avenue North • New Rockford, North Dakota 58356  
Phone 701-947-2944 • Fax 701-947-2290 • Email [administrator@lhgs.org](mailto:administrator@lhgs.org)

Friday, January 22, 2021

Tessa Johnson  
President  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Patricia Moulton Burwell  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Dear ND Center for Nursing

I am writing this letter to support SB 2198 which provides support for the organizational structure of the ND Center for Nursing and to build a new nursing workforce recruitment and retention program to serve North Dakota. Nurse staffing is in crisis in North Dakota, especially with the pandemic. There is a critical need for a centralized, coordinated effort to provide nurse staffing across the state. This is paired with the need for increased awareness and recruitment of future nurses to replace burned out nurses, an increased focus on recruiting ND nursing students to work in ND, increased recruitment of out-of-state and international nurses, the development of a centralized contract nursing staffing pool and the need to ensure that the work environment provides a positive workplace culture to ensure retention.

I support the ND Center for Nursing .....



Kim Jensrud  
Administrator  
Lutheran Home of the Good Shepherd  
[kjensrud@lhgs.org](mailto:kjensrud@lhgs.org)



# Ave Maria Village

*SMP Health Systems*

501 19th Street Northeast  
Jamestown, ND 58401  
PHONE: 701-252-5660  
FAX: 701-251-2643  
[www.avemariavillage.org](http://www.avemariavillage.org)

January 15, 2021

Tessa Johnson, President  
Patricia Moulton Burwell, Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
P.O. Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Dear Tessa and Patricia:

We are writing in strong support of SB 2198, which would provide support for the organizational structure of the North Dakota Center for Nursing, and build a new nursing workforce recruitment and retention program for the state.

Ave Maria Village is a 100-bed faith-based skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility. This past year, we have faced the most severe challenges we have ever had in recruiting qualified professional nurses. For the first time in many years, we are contracting with a travel nurse service in order to adequately staff our facility. During a major COVID-19 outbreak in our facility and community this past fall, not only were we utilizing costly travel nurses, but we were also heavily dependent upon the state emergency nurse pool to meet the needs of our residents. No recruitment incentives, even a substantial sign-on bonus, were bringing results. To be frank, the future looks grim in terms of attracting nurses to rural areas of North Dakota outside of the four major cities. It is truly a crisis which will only get worse unless we take strong and proactive steps to improve the situation.

Provisions in SB 2198 will enable the North Dakota Center for Nursing to provide a centralized, coordinated effort to enhance nurse staffing across the state. The Center will also increase awareness of the crisis that health care providers find themselves in. They will provide an increased focus on recruiting nursing students in the state to stay and work in North Dakota, and attracting nurses from out of state, both nationally and internationally. In addition, they will develop a centralized contract nursing pool, and promote positive workplace cultures to enhance nurse retention.

We wish you the best as you advocate for this important piece of legislation. Please contact us if there is any way we can help in this effort.

Sincerely,

Tim Burchill  
CEO

Tonie Lagodinski  
Assistant Administrator



Dear Senator, Roers,

I am writing today in support of SB 2198, which would lay our framework to help some of our staffing shortages and staffing crises in North Dakota. This is the North Dakota State Nurse Staffing Clearinghouse

My name is Tessa Johnson, and I am a registered nurse in North Dakota. I am the Executive Director of CountryHouse residence in Dickinson North Dakota. CountryHouse Residence is licensed as a basic care and memory care home. I also serve as the ND Center for Nursing as well as the NDNA President.

In many areas in nursing and healthcare around the state, we have faced staffing shortages at one point in time. During the last year during the COVID-19 crisis many of us had faced staffing crisis and staffing shortages like no other. I am an administrator of a long-term care facility and with staff members out with COVID-19 it was very difficult to staff our building at times.

Prior to COVID-19 we were often able to use local staffing agencies to fill needs. During this time, the demand is so high that even our local staffing agencies had a hard time helping us fill some of our shifts. There are many times or administrators, or leadership teams had to work in caregiver situations putting our work behind to the back burner for our residents to get the care we need. All these situations lead to burn out, exhaustion and leaving the practice.

There have also been times in which we have used agency that enjoy working for our company and with our residents. To keep them we must pay a large amount of money to buy their contract out which is very difficult for small facilities. This clearinghouse would give us the opportunity to help match these health care workers with a job they love.

As a nursing home administrator, I am speaking in favor of this staffing clearinghouse to help us mitigate this staffing crisis is in staffing shortages. We would be able to have help filling certified nursing assistant roles, nursing roles and other jobs in our buildings. We also would have to pay less recruitment fees and out-of-state contracts.

In addition, I feel like integrating the North Dakota nursing graduates into this program would help keep new graduate nurses in our state which is always a goal of ours.

If facilities are going to pay a higher amount for staffing through agency staff it would make more sense to keep the money in our state and keep it locally to benefit the nurses and other healthcare entities throughout our state.

I thank you for your consideration.

Warm Regards,

Tessa Johnson, MSN, BSN, RN CDP

Executive Director CountryHouse Residence

President, NDNA

President, ND Center for Nursing



✧ 1912-2018 ✧  
1515 Burnt Boat Drive  
Suite C #325  
Bismarck, ND 58503  
701-335-6376

January 15, 2021

Dear Senator Roers,

On behalf of the North Dakota Nurses Association, I am writing this letter to support SB 2198 which provides support for the organizational structure of the North Dakota Center for Nursing and to build a new nursing workforce recruitment and retention program to serve North Dakota.

Nurse staffing is in crisis in North Dakota, especially with the pandemic. There is a critical need for a centralized, coordinated effort to provide nurse staffing across the state. This is paired with the need for increased awareness and recruitment of future nurses to replace burned out nurses, an increased focus on recruiting ND nursing students to work in ND, increased recruitment of out-of-state and international nurses, the development of a centralized contract nursing staffing pool and the need to ensure that the work environment provides a positive workplace culture to ensure retention.

As part of the mission of NDNA is to advance the nursing profession by promoting professional development of nurses and fostering high standards of nursing practice, NDNA supports the ND Center for Nursing in this important work. We need a coordinated effort to ensure proper and safe staffing. We ask for your assistance and we respectfully ask that you also support SB 2198.

Sincerely,

Sherri Miller, BS, BSN, RN

[director@ndna.org](mailto:director@ndna.org)

Executive Director

North Dakota Nurses Association



January 18, 2021

Tessa Johnson  
President  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Patricia Moulton Burwell  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

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I support the ND Center for Nursing.

Mike Delfs  
President and CEO  
Jamestown Regional Medical Center  
[Michael.Delfs@jrmcn.com](mailto:Michael.Delfs@jrmcn.com)

February 2, 2021

Jane Christianson RN, FNP  
Board Member  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Patricia Moulton Burwell  
Executive Director  
North Dakota Center for Nursing  
Box 117  
Northwood, ND 58267

Dear Center for Nursing

I urge your support for SB 2198 which provides support for the organization the North Dakota Center for Nursing and to build a new nursing workforce recruitment and retention plan for North Dakota nurses.

Nurse staffing is in crisis in North Dakota, especially with the pandemic. There is a need for a centralized, coordinated effort to provide nurse staffing across the state as well as the need for increased awareness and recruitment for future nurses. More nurses are leaving the profession due to the increased stress of the pandemic. The Center for Nursing would provide services that will focus on retaining current nurses as well as recruiting ND nursing students. The development of a centralized contract nursing staffing pool would benefit current nurses in the state as well as a clearing house for out of state nurses to encourage working in North Dakota.

I support the North Dakota Center of Nursing

Jane Christianson, RN, FNP  
President, North Dakota Board of Nursing  
jmjmchristianson@gmail.com