



House Appropriations Committee, Human Resources Division - HB 1012

Representative Jon O. Nelson, Chair

January 26, 2021

Chairman Nelson, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I'm President the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. I am here today on behalf of our organization's approximately 1,200 members in support of HB 1012.

While it may seem out of place for a business organization to offer its support for the Department of Human Services appropriations bill, our 2021 Legislative Agenda specifically states, *"Support efforts to sustain Medicaid Expansion to ensure access to services and to mitigate increased expense to businesses."* And make no mistake, Medicaid Expansion is critically important to the Bismarck-Mandan business community.

One reason why is because Bismarck-Mandan's two largest private employers are healthcare providers. Thousands of employees in our community are employed in an industry directly impacted by Medicaid Expansion; the rates of which cover the cost of care. As not-for-profit entities, reducing those rates can directly impact their viability and in turn their ability to employ Bismarck-Mandan residents.

Additionally, if those rates are reduced, the cost of care will be shifted to private insurance carriers who may pass those costs on to the business community in the form of increased premiums. Once again, this is a direct impact on the business community and why we're here today supporting this legislation.

And finally, Medicaid Expansion becomes a business community concern because most Medicaid Expansion enrollees work in jobs that do not provide health insurance. In an economy that already has nearly 2,400 open jobs, any employee not able to participate in the workforce because of a health concern left untreated is a detriment to the business community.

In short, maintaining Medicaid Expansion rates at their current levels is a good thing for our providers, our employees and our community. As such, I respectfully ask the Committee for a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1012.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and should you have any questions, I would happy to address them.