

TESTIMONY OF BRANDON MAUAI
FOR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE
BEFORE THE HOUSE OF APPROPRIATION
HUMAN RESOURCE DIVISION
CONCERNING HB 1012
JANUARY 28, 2021

Members of the Committee:

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Councilman Brandon Mauai, I am the representative from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and serve as the Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has a government-to-government relationship with the United States of America which includes their subdivisions, the States. This relationship is reflected in our Treaties, which were signed in 1851 and 1868. These Treaties underscore the ongoing promises and obligations of the United States to the Tribe, and our testimony today is submitted with those promises and obligations in mind.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is within Sioux County, North Dakota, which happens to be one of the most impoverished counties in the United States. I am not here today to recite our nations long, sad history of its failures to uphold the trust responsibility to Native Americans. Instead, I would like to remind our state law makers, that one of the poorest counties, Sioux County, is here in our great state of North Dakota and has some of the worst health disparities in the nation. Additionally, the long list of gross health disparities the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe faces on a daily basis has only heightened since COVID-19.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is in support of bringing Medicaid Expansion under the supervision of the Department of Health and Human Services of North Dakota (DHHS). We support the savings of 10.7 million to the tribes and state. As the committee is aware, 90% of Medicaid Expansion is funded by federal dollars which includes FMAP for the Native American population. The federal FMAP dollars were intended to eliminate health disparities and improve outcomes in tribal communities.

Keeping Medicaid Expansion with the Managed Care Organization and all the costs associated will improve state and private sector associations, hospitals, services, staff, programs, departments, etc. However, that extensive list does not include tribal hospitals, tribal health care programs, tribal departments, tribal staff and providers, etc. In conclusion, the committee needs to take notice if these federal funds are being used to eliminate tribal health disparities in North Dakota. Please support bringing Medicaid Expansion "in-house" and under the Department of Health and Human Services of North Dakota (DHHS).