

March 10, 2021

Chairman Nelson
House Appropriations
Human Resources Committee

Recently your committee requested information about the status of Life Safety and Construction (LSC) Division projects of the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH). The following provides information about the review timelines and project costs for these projects.

During the current biennium LSC has completed the plan review of seventy-four (74) new and remodeled medical facilities ranging in scope from two-thousand (\$2,000) to one-hundred thirty-five million (\$135,000,000) dollars. Sixty-one (61) projects with a budget less than one-million dollars have been submitted and approved for construction. There were also six (6) projects submitted and reviewed between one and four-million (\$1,000,000 to \$4,000,000) and seven (7) greater than four-million (>\$4,000,000). Currently there are an additional eighteen (18) in our queue in various states of review.

Full staffing for LSC is four (4) full time plan reviewers. During much of the current biennium LSC was short staffed by two (2) plan reviewers. It was difficult to find and retain qualified staff. We became fully staffed in October of 2020.

LSC also staffs two (2) facilities surveyors. These staff conduct over two-hundred (200) life safety surveys per year of hospitals, skilled care, basic care, and ICF's throughout the state ensuring compliance with Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as well as others regulations.

During the 2019 – 2021 biennium, in effort to provide options for providers, the NDDoH developed the ability for licensed providers to utilize third-party plan reviewers instead of the NDDoH. A list of state-approved contractors has

been created and medical facility operators were notified of this service. The current arrangement requires the licensed provider to contract directly with the third-party plan reviewer. LSC maintains oversight, conducts the construction inspection and provides final approval to occupy the facility. This option has been available since August 2020 but has not been utilized. We believe use of this option can be an effective tool in completing plan reviews when work load exceeds the capacity of LSC to complete reviews within the specified time frames.

The LSC Division works very hard to provide thorough, accurate and timely plan reviews for licensed providers in North Dakota. We hope you find this information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

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Life Safety & Construction