

Testimony  
*To the*  
**House Human Services Appropriation Committee**  
*On*  
**SB 2004**

Good morning Chairman Nelson and members of the committee. I am Lisa Clute, Executive Officer of First District Health Unit. First District provides local public health services to Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, McLean, Renville, Sheridan, and Ward counties.

First District Health Unit, along with all Local Public Health Units have been stretched to our capacity and beyond throughout 2020. We are the “boots on the ground” responding to the people we serve. We have provided information pertinent to our communities needs and requests, guidance to restaurant and lodging facilities, assistance to event planners, coordinated with all the health care systems in our area to assure various access to vaccine, contact tracing, testing, fit testing, school consultations, while maintaining other disease prevention programs, WIC, substance abuse activities and environmental health services.

The vision of First District Health Unit is Healthy People in Healthy Communities. The Covid 19 pandemic upended business as usual as we responded to a virus that was little understood, spread rapidly, and caused severe illness and death in some individuals. Healthy communities were impacted by economic upheaval, uncertain educational schedules and medias, mental health challenges and loneliness. All of these are issues that First District takes seriously and into account when developing strategies and recommendations. The Board of Health defined keeping kids in school as one of their highest priorities and providing individuals tools to use to keep businesses open and communities thriving. Hence the layers of protection such as social distancing, mask use, hand hygiene, self care were recommendations we repeated often!

The Senate restored most of the tobacco funding to local public health units that was reduced in the Executive budget, maintained level funding for state aid, and maintained the dollars allocated in the Executive budget to local public health for Covid response. Local Public Health Units request the House concurs with the Senate budget as it relates to local public health.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.