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January 25, 2021

Dear Members of the House Human Services Committee:

SUPPORT OF HB 1328

I am writing on behalf of the North Dakota Nurses Association. We are in support of HB 1328, a bill relating to vitamin D screening and testing.

Research is revealing the importance of vitamin D in protecting against a host of health problems. Nursing is art and a science, and it is research based. There have been hundreds of studies on the benefits of vitamin D in breast cancer, colds and flu, and diabetes – to name only a few.

Most recently, findings suggest that “low serum vitamin D levels are a nutritional deficiency that plays a role in the immune response to COVID-19 infection and is an indicator of adverse patient outcomes (Grant, 2020)¹.” Supplementing vitamin D in individuals with levels of less than 20ng/mL could reduce the risk of respiratory infection, hospitalization, and mortality rates associated with COVID. Concerning cancer, another study found a “71% reduction in all cancer risk for post-menopausal women in the range of 20-40 ng/ml (50-100 nmol/L)²”. Just that alone is significant.

Nurses take this research to into practice, but we cannot properly educate on the value of vitamin D if the levels are not able to be ordered by nurse practitioners/physician assistants/physicians and are not covered by patients’ insurance. The testing is not done, so patients are not aware of the preventative measures that can be implemented.

Nurses have long claimed patient advocacy as fundamental to their practice. We want to be able to educate patients; therefore, we support HB 1328. We ask that you pass this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sherri Miller, BS, BSN, RN
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Executive Director
North Dakota Nurses Association

¹ (Grant, 2020)

² (McDonnell, et al., 2016)