



January 24, 2021

Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (NDAND). NDAND represents over 250 Registered Dietitians Nutritionists. We are in support of HB 1328 relating to vitamin D screening and testing.

Vitamin D deficiency is common in all age groups. Vitamin deficiency usually occurs as a result of inadequate vitamin D intake, impaired absorption of vitamin D, increased requirement for vitamin D or increased excretion of vitamin D.

Vitamin D is naturally found in a few foods (fatty fish, fish liver oils, egg, yolk and beef liver). Some foods that are commonly fortified with vitamin D include: dairy and plant-based milk, orange juice, cereal, margarine, cheese, and yogurt. It is difficult to obtain adequate vitamin D with food sources alone.

Sunlight is also a way our bodies can produce vitamin D. Unfortunately, North Dakotans are not able to get enough ultra-violet B energy from the sun to make the vitamin D due where we live.

Vitamin D is available as a dietary supplement and can be used to treat vitamin D deficiency. The gold standard is to test for deficiency before high dose treatment. No reimbursement for testing is a barrier to treatment as insurance often does not cover testing/screening.

According to the research, individuals and conditions that are high risk for vitamin D deficiency include: rickets, osteomalacia, osteoporosis, chronic kidney disease, liver failure, malabsorption syndromes, hyperparathyroidism, certain medications (anti-seizure, glucocorticoids, AIDS medications, antifungals and cholestyramine), African-American and Hispanic children and adults, pregnant and lactating women, older adults with history of falls, older adults with history of non-traumatic fractures, obese children and adults (prevalence of obesity in North Dakota is 34.8%), sarcoidosis, tuberculosis, histoplasmosis, coccidiomycosis, berylliosis and some lymphomas.

Removing the barrier of lack of reimbursement allowing coverage for vitamin D testing and screening can improve the health outcomes of the citizens of our state. This will allow providers to screen and test those at high risk for vitamin D deficiency without the financial burden to the patient and recommend appropriate treatment.

Please pass HB 1328.

Respectfully,

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NDAND President-elect

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