

January 26, 2021

House Judiciary Public Hearing

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Mark Schaefer and I am the Vice President for Community Medical Services, Northern Territory. Our clinics in Minot and Fargo, are two of the three programs, statewide, that provide Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) as an Opioid Treatment Program (OTP), using Methadone. I am here to testify in opposition to House Bill 1287, amending the conditions regarding overdose prevention.

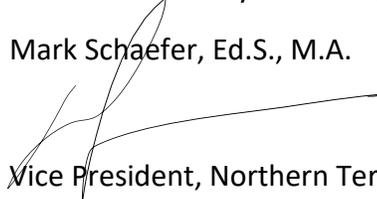
Specifically, the language that indicates “shares or otherwise provides a controlled substance to an individual”. While it is understood that the distribution and selling of illegal substances, ultimately leading to an overdose is the object of concern, the use of the above terms (shares or otherwise provides) renders the law ineffective for its intended purpose, saving lives.

The pursuit of those individuals providing substances through this amendment would leave individuals at risk and I would advocate that the benefit of a life saved outweighs the potential punishment for sharing illicit substances.

I believe there are situations where an overdose occurs, and subsequent death, and we look for someone to take responsibility for that. However, the unintended consequence of this bill would be to put more people at risk, more lives lost, and more families that lose their loved ones unnecessarily. I would urge the committee to consider amending the bill to ensure that our citizens, children, friends, and family members have every opportunity to save and be saved from the tragic repercussions of an overdose.

That concludes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.

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