

Testimony  
*To the*  
**House Appropriations -Human Services Division**  
*on*  
**HB 1004**

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.

I am in support of the additional \$2,750,000 state aid to local public health in the Governor's budget. State Aid is vital for local public health units to address the unique needs of the communities we serve. Local public health is continually assessing their community needs in regards to the community's ability to have healthy people in healthy communities. In the geographic area First District Health Unit serves, there are a wide range of needs that vary depending on access to health care (including mental health), emergency response times, varied economic and housing situations and leading causes of death.

Local public health units work with numerous community partners to address community needs. Partners include private health care providers, educators, clergy, local governments, UND family practice residents, emergency responders, parents, aging services, long term care facilities, etc. We need to be creative about addressing community needs and often use a multi-agency approach. That is why state aid is so important.

I have listened to the state health budget presentations and appreciate the work that they do. I want to provide additional information regarding the local health responses to some of the situations your committee has discussed.

- Tuberculosis – we have provided daily observed medication, facilitated quarantine orders, and arranged housing.
- Community engagement – we have worked with community coalitions and partners, and conducted focus groups to identify community needs and develop strategic plans that are unique to the subject communities. Throughout the Covid response we were accessible 24/7 to provide schools assistance and recommendation. We established and staffed a hotline that individuals could call and ask specific questions regarding their unique situations. We were averaging over 400 calls per day during the worst days of covid and throughout the vaccine rollout.
- Immunizations – throughout the COVID vaccine distribution we facilitated calls with 28 health care providers every Tuesday to move vaccine across providers and assure that priority groups in each community had access. We have a very good working relationship with health care providers.

Each Health Unit throughout the State develops services, activities and responses based on the resources available, and community needs. Local public health units appreciate your support. It allows us the ability to develop creative, efficient and effective strategies.

I would be happy to answer any questions.