



Chairman Weisz and Members of the Human Services Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to lend my support to HB 1416 so that patients have the freedom to choose their healthcare provider. I have been practicing physical therapy in Bismarck for almost 26 years and the last 18 years as a private practice owner. Prior to this I practiced in Phoenix Arizona and Davenport Iowa for a total of five years. I have been frustrated at times with the limited options patients have to see me for specialized services in Bismarck as they are confined to a specific network insurance product, often chosen by their employer group. Unfortunately, this has forced them to see an inexperienced provider within their network with at times leading to less than desirable outcomes.

HB 1416 will allow patients to see providers of all types that specialize in the care they need without paying out of pocket or being inconvenienced by poor treatment outcomes. In addition, this bill will help prevent patients from being forced by their insurer to see an in-network provider a great distance from their home. I have seen many examples of this in Bismarck when patients are required to travel to another city even though there are experienced and qualified local providers that are excluded from the network. This leads to increased costs for the patient and the healthcare system in general not to mention the inconvenience to the patient and their family.

I have also seen patients suffer unnecessarily while waiting many weeks or even months to see an in-network pain management provider for a spinal injection even though an independent provider was available that same week. This is not healthcare and certainly not humane.

I appreciate your time and consideration and urge you to vote yes on HB 1416. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding my position on this bill or any other matter involving my experiences with healthcare in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

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