

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Kimberly Bloms and I am the owner and physical therapist at Kids In Motion Pediatric Therapy in Mandan. We provide Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech services to children with complex diseases and disabilities.

Kids In Motion values our families and the reasons people choose our clinic are because we take a holistic approach to healthcare. We build relationships with families navigating child development and disease so that families can return to daily routines that you and I take for granted. Keeping their aggressive child in daycare, having friends, being able to make yourself a meal, move independently with a wheelchair, sitting through a class, learning a child has a rare disease and now navigating this new norm. This is the day to day of my patients and parents.

Kids in Motion provides many specialty services and we are the experts in our field in pediatric pelvic health. An example of this is helping 8-year-olds who are not able to control their bowel or bladder and is having accidents in school, playing with friends, or at a friend's sleepover and the impact it has on his relationships with others.

Being a pediatric provider in my field means spending 3-4 HOURS a week with families helping their child with repetition, 8-12 weeks at a time, and sometimes for a year, off and on, over the course of their life time. Teaching families to be an advocate, Education about condition, Education about supports and resources, and fast results leading to decreased financial burden on families is our priority. These are not the same values that every clinic in the town, state, or region has.

#### ACTUAL PATIENT:

Our five-year-old had been diagnosed with a small Lipoma in her spinal cord. After multiple scans and neurology appointments, the outlook was surgery to help her with bladder control. When we went through Urology we were told that therapy could maybe help, but most likely a need for a bladder test and then spinal surgery would be our only long-term options. We opted for bowel and bladder programming at Kids In Motion. She responded so well to the therapy and program at Kids in Motion. Within months, she was fully potty trained. I'm so thankful we didn't choose spinal surgery. The pros and cons were so obvious to us. Pull-ups and tracking food/bladder/bowel with weekly appointments or surgery... We're so glad we opted for the option for her to learn about her own body, rather than making alterations. We are so thankful to everyone at Kids In Motion for all their work with helping our daughter grow into herself.

Let me tell you about another child who had complex cerebral palsy and dislocated hips who required both hips to be reconstructed. The family chose Gillette's Children's specialty hospital for the procedure because they could reconstruct both hips at the same time. This option was denied by their narrow network insurance plan. The patient was required to go to an in-network facility and the child was required to have two separate surgeries, two separate days and

recoveries. This is just another way that narrow network providers are driving up cost for consumers by increasing travel for the family, missed time from work, cost for two hospitalizations, hospitalization time, and now putting a fragile child under anesthetic twice. Talk about family burden. If you are a parent of a child and are already running nonstop for medical appointments these additional burdens are painful and time consuming.

In 2021 Kids in Motion registered to be on a fundraising team sponsored by a local VIN for monies to support children with CP and other diseases. Families from anywhere could apply for funds to help fund wheelchairs, out of pocket therapy costs, home modifications, etc. I had started to learn that the VIN was changing the way money was distributed and that the foundation money was being funneled into other things such as therapist continuing education and equipment for The VINs' personal clinics. I reached out to the foundation to find out what percent was being spent on the kids and families and what percent goes to VIN Children's. The response I got was "we purposefully haven't set an exact percentage to ensure that our funds for our families remain the top priority. This year we will use the funds raised to fund applications and a portion of what remains will be used to support Children's Therapy Clinics." There are a number of individual providers, companies, clinics, independent providers who are not VIN affiliated that participated in fundraising because of the notion that it was for the kids. Why would outside providers fund VIN programs?

One example from the BISMARCK MOMMIES PAGE:

I will fully admit that I am not on top of things, however does anybody find it ridiculous that for a well child visit they are scheduling 4+ weeks out currently at the VIN? Have providers cut hours? Are there less providers? I just find it slightly odd.

ND is still very rural in terms of health care in pediatrics. Specialty providers such as endocrinology, physical medicine and rehab, pediatric neurology, gastroenterology are very few and far between. That in itself is a narrow network. Many of my patients have to travel to access VIN specific clinics.

I cannot count the times I have heard my families say

"I was told that I needed to stay in VIN clinics because it is easier to share information in our system versus collaborating with outside providers" "We want to refer to you but it is highly discouraged. If we can, we do"

In 2021 I inquired with provider relations to become an in-network provider of a VIN and was told that they have sufficient numbers of providers in the network to provide services.

Most individuals who have a plan with zero out-of-network options that call my clinic to set up evaluations, 5 kids a month, are unaware that they chose a plan without options. Most people in here don't know how to navigate deductibles, co pays, co-insurance, provider options, etc. Imagine having a six year old child that is now diagnosed with a rare genetic disease, who is having seizures, medical emergencies, surgeries and you can't choose who helps you. It is devastating. Choosing that plan without understanding the ramifications and now you are stuck with a plan that has

limited choices, lack of specialties, lack of timely care, long wait lists, poor communication because the providers are overwhelmed.

I am a Leukemia Survivor, I spent 6 months in the Mayo Clinic in 2016. Bismarck told me they could treat me but the reality of that is that if I would have stayed I wouldn't be standing in front of you to give this testimony. The resources I needed were beyond what a rural hospital community could provide. Transfusions, transplant, kidney operations. Freedom of patient choice is ultimate what saved my life.

Please provide our patients choice by voting DO PASS on HB 1416

Kimberly Bloms