

January 8, 2023

This letter is in regard to HB 1146. My name is Patty Hulm. I am a mental health counselor, infertility support group leader, Vice President of Everlasting Hope, and a past infertility patient. I am in support of fertility health benefits for public employees. I started the first infertility support group in the state of North Dakota in March of 2012. That group has met monthly since then, and added a virtual option during the COVID pandemic. I also have been a professional counselor in Bismarck, ND since January 2013. I have worked with couples and individuals over the years who are facing the emotional and physical struggles of infertility all across the state of North Dakota, thanks to telehealth options and virtual meeting platforms. The financial barrier that couples face to build their families puts a significant strain on their relationships. It is by no fault of their own that they are facing these medical conditions, but they are penalized by the lack of insurance coverage they receive because of their diagnosis of infertility. While emotional and physical struggles will continue for couples who face struggles with infertility, part of that burden can be lifted when they know that portions of these very expensive treatments will be covered. This is something positive that can be done at a state level to help with this burden and stress. I hope that this bill will receive the support it needs to move forward.

Sincerely,

Patty Hulm