

Testimony
Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2248
House Judiciary Committee
Representative Klemin, Chairman
March 13, 2023

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee, I am Kodi Pinks, Director of the Surveillance & Data Management Unit with the Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Division (Department). I am here to provide neutral testimony regarding Engrossed Senate Bill 2248. The Bill as amended requires on an annual basis, law enforcement agencies and health care providers to provide to the attorney general a completed case report form for every death the agency or the provider encounters which is caused by, suspected to have been caused by, or is related to fentanyl consumption.

The Department spoke to Senator Hogue recently regarding Section 2 of the Bill. We shared with him that much of this data is currently collected by the Department as part of the North Dakota Violent Death Reporting System program (NDVDRS). NDVDRS collects data on select violent deaths, including drug overdoses, through a variety of primary data sources. The data sources include death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, crime laboratory reports, and toxicology results.

We currently provide the attached report to our partners in Law Enforcement, Governor's Office, ND Department of Emergency Services, community action groups, tribal government, medical examiners/county coroners, etc., in an effort to provide timely data, identify gaps, and improve prevention efforts.

The Department is proposing Amendments to Section 2, indicating that reporting of deaths should be submitted to the Department. Additionally, the Department will provide annual reports to legislative management, the governor, the Attorney General's office, local public health as well as participating partners. In our discussions, Senator Hogue was comfortable with the Department working with the committee on this amendment.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.