



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF NORTH DAKOTA

Senate Appropriations - Government Operations Division Committee Hearing
Testimony In Support of Senate Bill #2003
1-25-23

Mister Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Greg Kasowski, and I am the executive director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota. I appear today in support of Senate Bill 2003, along with the amendment proposed by Senator Lee.

As many of you know, Children's Advocacy Centers provide services to children who are victims of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and other forms of child maltreatment. Two core services we provide for victims of child abuse are medical exams (also called "SANE [sexual assault nurse examiner] exams") and forensic medical examinations (also called "forensic interviews").

These services are key components of child abuse investigations, and directors of our Children's Advocacy Centers will provide further testimony about the importance of providing these services.

The funding for the evidence collection from these child medical exams and forensic interviews are listed in the Attorney General's budget under line 18 "**Medical examinations**" for \$660,000. The statute to provide for this funding is 12.1-34-07. Our understanding is that this \$660,000 fund is managed by a trust under the Insurance Department called the Insurance Regulatory Trust Fund.

In the 19-21 biennium, the medical examinations budget was depleted and Children's Advocacy Centers did not receive \$73,058 in needed reimbursements for forensic interviews.

For the 21-23 biennium, we also expect a shortage for the funding, but we are working on a solution to cover that projected depletion.

For the 23-25 biennium, we respectfully request a budget of \$1,059,000. This would cover the projected cost for SANE exams (\$754,000) and forensic interviews (\$304,500). This amount is based on 1) the fact that the needed funding has increased each year to meet the increased demand for these services, and 2) that the Red River Children's Advocacy Centers, which serves children and families in Fargo, Grand Forks and

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surrounding counties, has not requested forensic interview reimbursements interviews in the past and would begin doing so.

To provide some background about the process for these reimbursements from the Attorney General's office:

Reimbursements for **SANE exams** from the Attorney General's office are straightforward. Our medical provider partners submit reimbursement requests to the Attorney General at time of service.

Reimbursements for **forensic interviews** go through a process whereby reimbursements are submitted:

1. First, to private health insurance companies
2. Second, to Medicaid
3. Third, through the Crime Victims Compensation fund
4. And fourth, once a biennium (April) through the Attorney General's office

Finally, thank you for voting in favor of SB 2067, which passed the Senate Floor (43-0) on Jan. 6. The bill makes two policy changes to step 4 (Attorney General's forensic interview reimbursement) by:

1. Removing the April reimbursement window requirement so CACs can bill at the time of service.
2. Removing the private health insurance submission requirement, as health insurers do not reimburse for evidence collection of a crime, which is going to save us hundreds of hours in unnecessary paperwork.

Thank you for your time and I will stand for questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Kasowski
Executive Director

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