

3/6/2023

Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division
HB 1004
Support of Increase in State Aid – Local Public Health

Brenda Stallman
Hillsboro, ND

Hello, Chairman Dever & Members of the Senate Appropriations Human Resources Committee, my name is Brenda Stallman and I am the Executive Officer for Traill District Health Unit, which provides public health services for the communities of Hillsboro, Mayville, Portland, Hatton, Buxton, Blanchard, Cummings, Southern Reynolds, and Northern Grandin. The population of Traill County is roughly 8,000 people, and of no surprise, our county is classified as rural.

I am in support of the provision of an additional \$2.75 million in state aid to local public health within HB 1004 as in the Governor's budget.

This funding is critical to local public health departments. Each of the 28 local public health departments works within core functions of public health that include communicable disease control, chronic disease and injury prevention, environmental public health services, maternal-child-family health, and assurance of access to clinical care. Each local public health department works with their community partners to assess their community health needs and fill in gaps where existing services are lacking. We all rely on grant funding and local financial support, but often times funding is either too specific in the case of grants and does not allow us to address identified needs, or local funding is not adequate.

The flexibility of state aid funding to local health departments is crucial. Lisa at First District Health Unit in Minot covers 7 counties and works extensively with community partnerships to develop and implement strategic plans as in the pandemic response and provision of immunizations. The occurrence of Tb requires extensive

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staff oversight to assure community protection from spread of the disease. State aid funding has helped with that.

Sherry at Southwestern District Health Unit covers 8 counties. Her agency uses state aid funding to allow her staff to meet citizens where they are at, to keep them living safely in their homes and communities where they are comfortable. Her boots on the ground approach to a largely rural population requires financial resources for the provision of vaccinations and aging services.

In Traill County, our community health needs assessment has identified transportation as a top priority. We are working with community partners to establish a network of volunteers to supplement the work of our senior services program, which struggles to find drivers. We also employ a nurse to visit our senior citizens who are less mobile and confined to their homes. She fills their medication boxes, looks for changes in their health status on a weekly basis, and communicates with their physicians and families any changes that need attention. State aid makes up 6% of our overall budget. Our annual allocation in state aid is \$25,800. An increase in this funding would be very much welcome.

Local public health departments appreciate your support and are extremely grateful for state aid assistance.

I am happy to answer any questions.