



**Senate Appropriation
SB 2265
Testimony Kirsten Dvorak
February 1st, 2023**

Senator Bekkedahl and committee members. I am Kirsten Dvorak, Executive Director of The Arc of North Dakota; we have six chapters throughout the state of North Dakota that advocate on behalf of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) for full inclusion in their community of choice.

Today I am here to share the confusion that my son Radek age 23, and I have endured being dual-enrolled with Medicare and Medicaid. My son Radek; was diagnosed at 2 1/2 with autism and has a rare seizure disorder. Currently, he is attending Minot State with the help of ASTEP (Advancing Students Toward Education and Employment Program). This program helps students with intellectual and developmental disabilities navigate college through case management and with the support of mentors. He also works for BEK Sports running camera for sporting events and interns with the Minot Minotorros running camera during home games. Radek does have case management through Dept. of Health and Human Services, but no services. In addition, he is still on our insurance.

Last year Radek received a letter stating that he would start Medicare in September, with no instructions on how the two would work together. We tried to contact his case manager at the time. However, she knew nothing about it and said we should call SSI. We tried to cancel Medicare. However, we were told that it's not easy to reinstate. So we were told to call our human service zone. However, he was disenrolled the last time we tried to call and adjust his Medicaid, and the person he dealt with wasn't so kind. So he has not made that call. He doesn't even know what to ask for.

It is truly unfair and overwhelming for families and individuals to navigate the system alone when they are already stretched to their limits taking care of a loved one. It is also concerning to see that the system needs to be improved in understanding how to provide help. We must ensure that families are given the help and support they need to ensure their loved ones are well taken care of. We must work together to ensure that families have access to the necessary resources to make the process easier and more efficient.

Kirsten Dvorak
701-222-1854