

**TESTIMONY**

**HOUSE BILL 1513**

**HOUSE FINANCE AND TAXATION COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRPERSON JORDAN KANNIANEN**

**MARCH 13, 2023**

Chairperson Kannianen and distinguished members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee, for the record my name is Stephen P. Astrup, Project and Regulatory Counsel for Hospice of the Red River Valley (HRRV) and I am joined by my colleagues, Tracee Capron, Executive Director for HRRV, and Theresa Stahl, Director of Finance for HRRV. We are here today to provide testimony on House Bill 1513 and ask that you give this bill a **DO PASS** recommendation as it is in its current state.

We appreciate the support of the North Dakota House of Representatives in passing House Bill 1513, but want to ensure there is no untimely delay in its implementation.

HRRV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit provider, our income does not inure to any individual or private shareholder. Our revenue is used to provide services to our patients. In 2022, we touched 2,523 patients and their families providing 149,580 days of care. We want and need to do more. We are currently building North Dakota's first free-standing, community-based hospice inpatient facility to provide acute care when needed by our patients, and to provide respite care when a caregiver needs a much-deserved break. The costs for this care are predominantly reimbursed medical expenses from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Our project was impacted by COVID-19 as prices for construction materials dramatically increased – to the extent it jeopardized our project. Prior to the introduction of House Bill 1513, unless we had a labor-only contract, the sales tax in a significant – almost detrimental – cost. Entering into a labor-only contract for construction is excruciatingly difficult to facilitate due to the complexities created. We were an unintended consequence of House Bill 1309 passed in the 2021 Legislative Session. We are healthcare providers and not construction contractors, which brings additional risk to our project as we attempt to maneuver through purchases of building materials, we know nothing about.

HRRV plays a vital role in building healthy communities by providing critical services that contribute to economic stability and health of all North Dakotans we serve. In an era of growing needs and shrinking government resources, we are and continue to be asked to do more with less, placing an additional strain on our already limited resources. As a result, we are starved for the kind of support that strengthen our operations, enable us to deliver our services more effectively, and ultimately help create a stronger economy and healthier population – and this is good for all sectors.

The passage of House Bill 1513 would allow us to construct North Dakota's first and only free-standing, community-based hospice house and focus on our mission instead of learning how to purchase construction materials. Please give House Bill 1513 a **DO PASS** recommendation.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Should you have any questions subsequent to today's hearing, please feel free to contact me via phone (701) 356-1500 or via email at [stephen.astrup@hrrv.org](mailto:stephen.astrup@hrrv.org).

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen P. Astrup, Project and Regulatory Counsel  
Hospice of the Red River Valley