



Good morning Senator Lee and Fellow Committee Members,

My name is Shar Trevithick. I am a registered nurse and the manager of the Jamestown Regional Medical Center Home Health and Hospice Agency in Jamestown. I also am a member of the North Dakota Hospice Organization, and am honored to speak alongside Rochelle Vander Vliet on behalf of Hospice providers in North Dakota.

Providing Hospice care in rural, under-served North Dakota is at the forefront of nearly every conversation we have as Hospice providers. We live and work in these communities where we deliver quality, safe care to our friends, neighbors, and loved ones. We believe that all residents of North Dakota should have quality end-of-life care available to them, and we stand ready to deliver that care. We fully recognize the need to expand access to Hospice care in under-served areas of our state, and I appreciate the opportunity to provide necessary input to you from the perspective of my agency.

As it is written, Senate Bill 2332 is drafted to benefit only one entity. This raises concerns over the quality of care that would be provided when the potential of a care monopoly is created. Care in rural areas is best delivered by those familiar with that region and those residents, not by a singular agency with no local or regional oversight. Hospice providers in rural areas are invested in our communities and most importantly, the people we serve.

Rochelle spoke to you about the general goal of expansion of care, and I would like to focus on the importance of Hospice in North Dakota. Every one of us has a story about how end-of-life care impacted their family- whether it is a story of the wonderful experience a loved one had the end of life because Hospice was present, or a story of a painful journey without the support and care that was desperately needed. Hospice providers are among the most resourceful, driven, compassionate people you will meet. We have been known to put on a backpack and walk through a blizzard to get to a patient who needs us. We have put mattresses in our cars and arrived at homes laden with supplies, medications, and necessities to provide comfort and confidence to patients and caregivers. Each of us has many stories of cases where our agency dug deep to bring care to a patient who otherwise would have experienced suffering and discomfort without the support of Hospice. Unfortunately, we also have stories of cases where we were unable to reach a patient, and every time it is a decision that we wrestle with. Expanding into a new service area requires funds that Hospices simply do not have available- we utilize every dollar we are paid to provide services to the patients we serve within existing service areas, and our expenditures are rising faster than we can adapt to.

All residents have the right to access quality Hospice care, and the responsibility of providing this is recognized fully. The desire to meet this need is strong, and the expertise is present in our state to accomplish this. An amended bill that would specify that multiple organizations can apply for and be awarded funds, as well as clarify how it would be ensured that rural areas are benefiting directly from the funds, would be required to receive the support of Hospice as a whole in North Dakota.



Thank you for your consideration in amending the Senate Bill 2332 to reflect the requested provisions, and allowing all stakeholders to provide invaluable input into decisions made affecting end-of-life care options for the residents of North Dakota.

Respectfully,

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