



**Senate Human Services Committee**

**SB 2378**

**February 8, 2023**

Chair Lee and Committee Members, I'm Courtney Koebele, executive director of the North Dakota Medical Association. I present this testimony on behalf of the North Dakota Medical Association. The North Dakota Medical Association is the professional membership organization for North Dakota physicians, residents, and medical students. NDMA supports SB 2378.

The practice involves insurance companies forcing medications that are administered in a clinic to be purchased through an insurer's exclusive pharmacy of choice. The medications, specifically for one patient, are then sent to a physician's office or a hospital where they are administered to patients. This new practice is being used for chemotherapy medications, certain ophthalmologic medications, and other physician administered drugs. The practice adds unnecessary complexity to the physician/patient relationship, raises patient safety issues, and may cause delays in patient care.

The required use of "white bagging" replaces the current system where a clinic has a supply of needed medications in stock that can be used to address the patient's needs. When the insurer requires the drug to be ordered for the patient from their pharmacy, it limits the physician's ability to adjust the medications as needed when treating the patient.

With white bagging, drugs are not always delivered in time for the patient's appointment. If medications aren't available when needed, the patient must reschedule, which may result in less adherence and scrambled treatment plans. The unintended consequence is the impact on patients, such as wasted travel time, time off work, and frustrations of navigating a more complex system.

Another inefficiency created in white bagging is that the medication arrives in time, but the physician changed the treatment. The drug is now wasted, and the needed therapeutic isn't available. Using the existing model of care, it's easier for the onsite pharmacy to make that change.

This bill does not mandate the use of local pharmacies and allows the patient and provider to choose if white bagging is appropriate for them or not.

NDMA requests a DO PASS recommendation on the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.