



Senate Human Services Committee

SB 2384

February 7, 2023

Chair Lee and Committee Members, my name is Joan Connell. I am a pediatrician in Bismarck and I'm president of the North Dakota Medical Association's 6th District Medical Society. 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 opposes SB 2384. Although COVID-19 immunizations were probably the source of the bill, it applies to all vaccines, developed using messenger ribonucleic acid technology (mRNA). This technology is extremely promising for future vaccines. Dozens of clinical trials are testing mRNA treatment vaccines in people with various types of cancer, including pancreatic cancer, colorectal cancer, and melanoma.

<https://www.cancer.gov/news-events/cancer-currents-blog/2022/mrna-vaccines-to-treat-cancer>

Some vaccines are being evaluated in combination with drugs that enhance the body's immune response to tumors. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) – a virus that can be fatal in young children and older adults, currently has no vaccines. However, Moderna is working on an mRNA vaccine for RSV that has the potential to improve mortality outcomes by preventing death in this vulnerable population.

This bill makes it a criminal offense to give anyone the currently FDA approved mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna. Furthermore, it would prevent physicians from giving future FDA fully-approved vaccines that may come about with mRNA technology, even to patients that desire them. North Dakotans would be forced to seek health care outside the state to get vaccines that may be wanted or desired by both the patient and their physician.

This interferes in the patient/physician relationship at an unprecedented level, making legal and approved therapies unavailable to the citizens of North Dakota, under penalty of criminal prosecution of their physician.

This is a very dangerous and deliberate anti-science bill that places the health and safety of North Dakotans at risk while rolling back decades of research, development and technology advancement that is critical to our ability to respond to current and future epidemics.

NDMA requests a DO NOT PASS recommendation on the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.