Heartview Foundation

"The provider of choice for quality treatment and education of substance use disorders."

Est. 1964

Nationally Accredited

Testimony of Kurt Snyder

Heartview Foundation

In Opposition of SB 2199

Senate Judiciary Committee

Jan. 18, 2023

Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

My name is Kurt Snyder and I am the executive director of the Heartview Foundation. I would like to express Heartview Foundation's opposition to SB 2199. Established in 1964, the Heartview Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit substance use treatment facility with facilities in Bismarck-Mandan and Cando. We currently have over 130 employees and serve around 500 clients at any given time.

Clients come to Heartview Foundation when they are at their lowest. In addition to dealing with major addictions, they often have untreated mental illnesses, sometimes even suicidal ideations. Heartview staff meet patients where they are at in order to provide the best care possible. Requiring counselors to use pronouns associated with the sex transgender individuals were assigned at birth could be extremely detrimental to our patients' health. Heartview serves a population that are sometimes very broken, and it is our calling to treat these individuals with respect and build them back up so they can recover. An estimated 30% of LGBTQ+ individuals have some form of addiction, compared to 9% of the general population. Transgender individuals are extremely high risk, with a recent study showing 81.7% of transgender people report they have seriously thought about suicide. According to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, using preferred names and pronouns is associated with better mental health outcomes, including reduced depression and suicide risk.

Heartview Foundation does treat transgender individuals using their preferred pronouns without complaints from staff or other patients. This bill is attempting to solve a problem which does not exist. In order to continue to respectfully treat the extremely vulnerable population we work with, Heartview Foundation opposes this bill.