

Testimony House Bill 1221- IN SUPPORT
Senate Workforce Development
Sixty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
March 9, 2023

Greetings Chairman Wobbema, Vice Chair Axtman, and Senate Workforce Development Committee.

My name is Joan Connell. I am a local pediatrician in support of HB 1221. This bill allows for patients to easily see their healthcare providers' credentials by having providers clearly display their credentials on their person and/or at their offices as well as prohibiting false advertising of credentials.

Historically, a visit with Dr. So-and-So meant a visit with your MD or DO trained physician. As I am sure you are aware, there has been a significant increase in the number and type of advanced practice providers with doctoral degrees, which is great as we continue to strive to meet the health care needs of patients in our state. You are also likely aware of the growing diversity of healthcare providers including pharmacists, naturopaths, physical therapists, chiropractors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and physicians. With the exception of physician assistants, many of these other providers have graduated from doctoral level programs, each requiring a unique set of coursework and experiential training. Some of these practitioners are covered by health insurance. Others are not. Some have prescriptive rights. Some do not. Some are promoted to put the "health" in health care while others are promoted to put the "care" in health care.

This increase in the variety of providers ultimately provides patients with the opportunity to choose the provider that is right for them. However, this opportunity is lost when the patient is unable to easily discern the practitioner's credentials. For those of you who listen to local radio, I would like to use the recent ads from Dakota Natural Health Center, where Terry the pharmacist promotes his team of nurse practitioners and naturopathic doctors to provide a "natural approach to comprehensive health" as a triple gold star for truth in advertising. The patient, or consumer of health care, is made explicitly aware of the credentials of the health care providers at this clinic. This should be the expectation whether the patient is seeking outpatient care for an acute or chronic problem or in the hospital where the patient is encountered by a myriad of providers throughout the day.

Therefore, I am asking for you to vote yes for HB 1221, in support of transparency of health care providers credentials to make it more possible for our patients to be able to choose the provider who is right for them.

Thank you. I'd be happy to answer any questions.