



BUDGET SECTION - HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

Wednesday, September 24, 2025
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Jon O. Nelson, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

Members present: Senators Kyle Davison, Jeffery J. Magrum, Tim Mathern; Representatives Bert Anderson, Mike Berg, Eric J. Murphy, Jon O. Nelson, Gregory Stemen, Scott Wagner

Members absent: Senators Dick Dever, Sean Cleary; Representatives Alisa Mitskog, Matthew Ruby

Others present: Sarah Aker, Laura Anderson, Donna Aukland, Jessica Thomasson, Alanna Zeller, Department of Health and Human Services; Jessica Christy, North Dakota Council on the Arts; Brad Hawk, Indian Affairs Commission; and Joel Larson, Altru Health System

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

BUDGET REVIEW - SELECTED AGENCIES

North Dakota Council on the Arts

Ms. Jessica Christy, Executive Director, North Dakota Council on the Arts, presented information ([Appendix B](#)) on the grant programs, partnerships, and initiatives of the agency.

In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. Christy indicated the Art for Life Program is currently in nine facilities.

Indian Affairs Commission

Mr. Brad Hawk, Executive Director, Indian Affairs Commission, presented information ([Appendix C](#)) on the Government-to-Government Conference, the Governor's tribal nation visits, ongoing initiatives, and strategic partnerships.

Protection and Advocacy Project

Ms. Veronica Zietz, Executive Director, Protection and Advocacy Project, presented information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding programs and individuals the agency serves, federal funding and potential reductions, and the focus areas for federal fiscal year 2026.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

2025-27 Biennium Budget

Ms. Donna Aukland, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information on the department's 2025-27 biennium budget. She noted the department has not made any line item transfers to date ([Appendix E](#)). She reviewed information ([Appendix F](#)) on the salaries and wages block grant and noted that no new positions were added and none were removed.

Federal Rural Health Transformation Program

Ms. Sarah Aker, Executive Director, Division of Medical Services, Department of Health and Human Services, noted items ([Appendix E](#)) pertaining to the application for the federal Rural Health Transformation Program. She discussed the department's survey which collected priorities and ideas for use of the funding, the program timeline, application requirements, and unallowable costs.

Behavioral Health Facility Grants

Ms. Laura Anderson, Policy Director, Behavioral Health Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) on the behavioral health facility grants awarded to Altru Health System, CHI St. Alexius Health Williston, and CHI St. Alexius Health Bismarck.

BEHAVIOR HEALTH FACILITIES**Altru Health System in Grand Forks**

Mr. Joel Larson, General Counsel, Altru Health System, presented information ([Appendix G](#)) on the status of the Altru project that is adding 24 behavioral health care beds.

CHI Health in Williston

Mr. David Jones, Market President, CHI Critical Access Hospitals, presented information ([Appendix H](#)) on the status of adding 10 beds, including a seclusion room, to the Behavioral Health Unit at CHI Health in Williston.

In response to a question from a committee member on staffing, Mr. Jones noted staff are currently being recruited for the expanded facility.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics**

Ms. Alanna Zeller, Director of Clinic Operations, Behavioral Health Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) on the planning and implementation of the certified community behavioral health clinics. She noted the first four clinics are anticipated to be certified by July 2026.

Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Ms. Jessica Thomasson, Executive Director, Human Services Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) on the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, including current level of usage and the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act effects on the program. She explained the cost-share implications and the timeline. She indicated that based on the state's current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payment error rate for federal fiscal year 2024, North Dakota would have a 5 percent cost-share on the benefits paid. In addition she noted the federal share of administrative costs will decrease from 75 to 50 percent. She also reviewed the department's strategy to lower the current error rate.

In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. Thomasson noted the items that affect the error rate include client reporting errors, worker processing errors, documentation errors, and insufficient staff knowledge.

No further business appearing, Vice Chairman Nelson adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

Adam Mathiak
Senior Fiscal Analyst

Keith Mantz
Fiscal Analyst

ATTACH:8