



RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 21, 2025
Senate Chamber, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Brad Bekkedahl, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members present: Senators Brad Bekkedahl, Sean Cleary, David A. Clemens, Kyle Davison*, Kathy Hogan*, Jeffery J. Magrum, Tim Mathern*, Kristin Roers, Desiree van Oosting; Representatives Bert Anderson, Karen A. Anderson, Mike Beltz, Mike Berg, Macy Bolinske, Jayme Davis, Gretchen Dobervich, Clayton Fegley, Kathy Frelich, Jared Hendrix, Dawson Holle*, Dwight Kiefert, Alisa Mitskog, Eric J. Murphy, Jon O. Nelson, Karen M. Rohr, Matthew Ruby, Gregory Stemen, Don Vigesaa, Scott Wagner, Robin Weisz

Members absent: Senators Dick Dever, Judy Lee, Kent Weston; Representative Nico Rios

Others present: Representative Mike Lefor, Dickinson, member of Legislative Management; Liz Fordahl and Beth Dittus, Legislative Council; Sarah Aker and Donna Aukland, Department of Health and Human Services
**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Representative Nelson, seconded by Representative Mitskog, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the October 14-15, 2025, meeting be approved as distributed.

Ms. Sarah Aker, Executive Director, Medical Services Division, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([appendix](#)) regarding the state's application for the federal Rural Health Transformation Program. Ms. Aker noted:

- The state is estimated to receive \$500 million of baseline funding.
- The state also may apply to receive additional workload funding based on weighted factors.

Ms. Aker reviewed the following preliminary funding allocations to be included in the state's grant application by major initiative area based on the state receiving \$500 million. She noted the state's application will be based on the assumption of receiving an additional \$500 million of workload funding.

Initiative	Percent of Total Budget	Total Funds (in Millions)
Bring high-quality care closer to home	58.4%	\$291.7
Connect technology, data, and providers	16.8%	84.9
Strengthen and stabilize rural health workforce	16.2%	81.0
Make North Dakota healthy again	8.6%	42.4
Total	100.0%	\$500.0

Ms. Aker reviewed the following preliminary information regarding the components to be included in each major initiative in the state's grant application.

Initiative	Percent of Total Budget	Components
Bring high-quality care closer to home	58.4%	Coordinating and connecting care, ensuring transportation, ensuring safety net service delivery, providing clinics without walls, sustaining revenue, and rightsizing rural care
Connect technology, data, and providers	16.8%	Supporting consumer-focused applications, harnessing new technology, purchasing cooperative technology and infrastructure, and breaking data barriers
Strengthen and stabilize rural health workforce	16.2%	Training for existing workforce, developing technology as an extender, improving retention, and expanding rural training opportunities
Make North Dakota healthy again	8.6%	Investing in value, building connections and resiliency, and establishing a North Dakota Moves Together Program and an Eat Well North Dakota Program

Ms. Aker and Ms. Donna Aukland, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services, responded to committee member questions.

Ms. Liz Fordahl, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented a bill draft [\[25.1383.01000\]](#) to require schools to utilize the Presidential Physical Fitness Test.

Ms. Beth Dittus, Assistant Legal Division Director, Legislative Council, presented the following bill drafts:

- A bill draft [\[25.1384.01000\]](#) to require a nutrition component for physician continuing education requirements.
- A bill draft [\[25.1385.01000\]](#) for the state to join a physician assistant licensure compact.
- A bill draft [\[25.1386.01000\]](#) to expand the scope of practice for pharmacists relating to laboratory testing and prescriptive authority.

It was moved by Representative Nelson, seconded by Representative Frelich, and carried on a roll call vote that the committee expresses its support for the Department of Health and Human Services' grant application plan for the federal Rural Health Transformation Program. Senators Bekkedahl, Cleary, Clemens, Davison, Magrum, Mathern, Roers, and van Oosting and Representatives B. Anderson, K. Anderson, Beltz, Berg, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Felich, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Mitskog, Murphy, Nelson, Rohr, Ruby, Stemen, Vigasaa, Wagner, and Weisz voted "aye." No negative votes were cast.

It was moved by Representative Nelson, seconded by Representative Rohr, and carried on a roll call vote that the committee recommend bill drafts [\[25.1383.01000\]](#), [\[25.1384.01000\]](#), [\[25.1385.01000\]](#), and [\[25.1386.01000\]](#), to the Legislative Management. Senators Bekkedahl, Cleary, Clemens, Davison, Hogan, Mathern, Roers, and van Oosting and Representatives B. Anderson, K. Anderson, Beltz, Berg, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Felich, Hendrix, Holle, Kiefert, Mitskog, Murphy, Nelson, Rohr, Ruby, Stemen, Vigasaa, Wagner, and Weisz voted "aye." Senator Magrum voted "nay."

It was moved by Representative Davis and seconded by Representative Dobervich to recommend the Department of Health and Human Services allocate at least 5 percent of grant funding for tribal health purposes. After committee discussion, Representative Davis withdrew the motion.

Representative Davis suggested the Department of Health and Human Services utilize weighting factors to enhance funding for tribal health services.

Ms. Aker noted the grant award criteria will use measures to enhance opportunities for funding tribal health program needs.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Bekkedahl announced the committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on Thursday, December 4, 2025.

No further business appearing, Chairman Bekkedahl adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Brady A. Larson
Assistant Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

Allen H. Knudson
Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

ATTACH:1