



RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 4, 2025
Senate Chamber, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Brad Bekkedahl, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Brad Bekkedahl, Sean Cleary, David A. Clemens, Kyle Davison, Dick Dever, Kathy Hogan, Judy Lee, Jeffery J. Magrum, Tim Mathern, Kristin Roers, Desiree van Oosting, Kent Weston; 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

Members absent: Representatives Nico Rios, Robin Weisz

Others present: Sarah Aker and Pat Traynor, Department of Health and Human Services
Beth Dittus, Legislative Council, Bismarck

**Attended remotely.*

It was moved by Representative Nelson, seconded by Senator Davison, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the October 21, 2025, meeting be approved as distributed.

FEDERAL RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

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

- The Department of Health and Human Services will use an internal steering committee for project oversight to meet federal grant requirements.
- The department will collaborate with other state entities, external partners, and stakeholders on award processes.
- The grant award process will include a mechanism to ensure funding is prioritized relative to impacts in areas of need.
- The federal government is anticipated to announce state award recipients by December 31, 2025.

Ms. Aker noted the state submitted its grant application based on an assumed award of \$200 million per year for 5 years. She reviewed the following major initiative areas included in the grant application, including the percentage of the total grant award allocated to each initiative area and components included in each initiative:

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

Mr. Pat Traynor, Interim Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services, presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding chronic health conditions. He noted:

- The number of adults in the country living with major chronic health conditions has increased significantly since 1970.
- Funding required to treat adults in the country with chronic health conditions also has increased significantly.
- Moderate physical activity decreases the risk of an adult obtaining a chronic health disease by 12 to 58 percent.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Bekkedahl announced the committee is tentatively scheduled to meet in January 2026 to review the results of the grant application and to consider any legislation necessary to appropriate funds and implement approved grant initiatives.

No further business appearing, Chairman Bekkedahl adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Brady A. Larson
Assistant Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

Allen H. Knudson
Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

ATTACH:2