



HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, July 15, 2026
Roughrider Room, State Capitol
Bismarck, North Dakota

Representative Carrie McLeod, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Carrie McLeod, Karen Grindberg, Karen Karls, Lisa Meier, Jon O. Nelson, Mitch Ostlie, Karen M. Rohr, Mary Schneider; Senators Judy Lee, Tim Mathern, Kristin Roers, Desiree van Oosting

Members absent: None

Others present: Thomas F. Arnold, Maternal Mortality Review Committee; Christine Greff, Department of Health and Human Services; Taha Khan,* Vertex Pharmaceuticals; Brand Newland,* Goldfinch Health

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

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Representative Rohr, seconded by Representative Meier, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the February 12, 2026, meeting be approved as distributed.

REPORTS

Maternal Mortality Review Committee

Dr. Thomas F. Arnold, Chairman, Maternal Mortality Review Committee, presented the Maternal Mortality Review Committee's annual report ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the identification of patterns, trends, and policy issues related to maternal mortality pursuant to North Dakota Century Code Section 23-51-08.

State Fire Marshal

Mr. Matt Clark, State Fire Marshal, Insurance Department, presented the biennial report ([Appendix C](#)) of findings and recommendations for legislation to improve the effectiveness of the law on reduced ignition propensity standards for cigarettes pursuant to Section 18-13-02.

State Comprehensive Stroke System

Ms. Christine Greff, Stroke and Cardiac Systems Coordinator, Emergency Medical Systems Unit, Department of Health and Human Services, presented the biennial report ([Appendix D](#)) on the progress made toward recommendations provided under the plan for achieving continuous improvements in the quality of care provided under the state comprehensive stroke system for stroke response and treatment pursuant to Section 23-43-04.

ELECTRONIC PRIOR AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS STUDY

Mr. Taha Khan, Associate Director, Health Economics and Outcomes Research, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding patient access to nonopioid pain management therapies, including issues related to prior authorization requirements and mandates.

Mr. Blair B. Thoreson, Government Relations and Regulatory Affairs, Primacy Strategy Group, introduced Mr. Brand Newland, Chief Executive Officer, Goldfinch Health, to the committee.

Mr. Newland presented information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding measures being taken in North Dakota to combat opioid addiction.

In response to a request from the committee, Ms. Megan Hruby, Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, provided information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding alternatives to fax or mail for transmitting prior authorization requests and supporting medical records.

UNMET DENTAL AND ORAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS STUDY

Ms. Kim Kuhlmann, External Affairs Manager, Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas, presented information ([Appendix H](#)) regarding recommendations related to the study of unmet dental and oral health care needs.

In response to a request from the committee, Ms. Kuhlmann provided information ([Appendix I](#)) regarding tooth pain-related emergency department visits.

The committee discussed recommendations to improve access to dental care in North Dakota, including allowing dental professionals to work at the top of their scope of practice, increasing the dental workforce through education and loan repayment programs, and improving Medicaid reimbursement. A committee member expressed concern about balancing these proposals against a constrained state budget, while other members noted the importance of prioritizing funding where it would have the greatest impact.

The committee expressed interest in receiving additional information from the State Board of Dental Examiners, State Board of Pharmacy, Department of Health and Human Services, and other interested stakeholders to develop informed recommendations.

No further business appearing, Chairman McLeod adjourned the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Beth Dittus
Assistant Legal Division Director

ATTACH:9