

HB 1012: Testimony on Solutions for Financial Challenges in Basic Care
House Appropriations-Human Resources Division
January 27, 2025

Good Afternoon Chairman Nelson and Members of the House Appropriations, Human Resource Division,

My name is Kiara Tuchscherer, and I'm the Administrator for the Good Samaritan Society in Fargo, where we've been providing care to residents aged 55 and older for over 17 years. We are a one-level Basic Care and Assisted Living facility with 72 apartments. As the Basic Care Director at Large for the ND Long Term Care Association and someone who works closely with residents, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of HB 1012 with three critical amendments for basic care funding.

Let me share a couple of stories; I have changed these resident names in my testimonial. "John," a retired teacher, has been with us for four years. He's an active participant in our book club and exercise programs. John's experience shows the value of congregate care, he's able to stay engaged both mentally and physically in a community setting, which helps him thrive.

"Betty," who is 82 and has dementia, came to us after struggling in a more isolated living situation. Now, she has the social support she needs to stay safe and connected, and her family is grateful for the care and dignity we provide her. Expanding the **3% operating rate across all components, excluding property costs**, would provide about \$1.12 million in financial support over the biennium. This would allow us to expand programs that keep residents like John and Betty engaged, active, and socially connected.

The **\$5 per day add-on** for Basic Care rates in 2026 and 2027 would offer another \$2.68 million, ensuring we can continue to meet residents' needs. Additionally, the 1.5% in Governor's Armstrong's budget the proposed **4%** inflator for 2026 and **3%** for 2027 would help us keep up with rising costs, ensuring we can maintain and recruit quality staff.

We are in constant competition with other healthcare facilities for staff, and without these increases, it's challenging to attract and retain the dedicated caregivers who provide the compassionate care our residents deserve. Financial support is essential for maintaining the staff that makes a real difference in residents' lives and for continuing the high level of care we offer.

Residents choose Good Samaritan Society because they want more than just a place to live, they want a community where they can stay connected, safe, and engaged. These proposed amendments will help us continue providing that, ensuring we can offer the personalized care, stability, and dignity our residents need.

I urge the adoption of these amendments to ensure Basic Care continues to thrive and meet the needs of residents like John and Betty.

Thank you for your time today. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

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