

**Testimony House Bill 1570
House Finance and Taxation Committee
February 12, 2025**

Chairman Headland and Members of the Committee:

I am Kim Kuhlmann, Policy and Partnership Manager in North Dakota with Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD). CHAD serves as the primary care association representing our member Federally Qualified Health Centers (also known as community health centers) across North Dakota and South Dakota. On behalf of our members, we ask that you support HB 1570 and give this bill a do pass recommendation.

Community health centers (CHCs) are non-profit, community-based primary care clinics that serve all individuals, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay. The community health center integrated care model includes primary care, mental health and substance use treatment, dental care, pharmacy services, and a range of case management services that can include help with transportation, finding community resources, or assistance with insurance and financial enrollments.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the U.S. and North Dakota. CHAD and our member health centers support increasing the tobacco tax to discourage youth from starting to use tobacco and nicotine products, reduce the number of adults and youth who are using tobacco products, and help North Dakota reach it's aspirational goal of becoming the "healthiest state in the nation".

The additional revenue generated by increasing the tobacco tax with this bill will be used for depression and anxiety behavioral health services at the regional human service centers across North Dakota, who are treating some of the most vulnerable individuals in our state for behavioral health and substance use disorders and are treating patients regardless of their ability to pay.

CHAD supports HB 1567 to reduce tobacco use, especially in youth and create a healthier North Dakota. Thank you, I will be happy to answer questions.



Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas

Kim Kuhlmann

Policy and Partnership Manager, ND

Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD)