



Honorable Members of the House of Human Services Committee,

My name is Megan Dooley, and I am the owner of Innovative Therapy Solutions & Consulting LLC. We work closely with the North Dakota Alzheimer's Association to provide essential services to individuals living with dementia, their families, and professionals throughout the state. I am submitting this testimony in full support of the proposed bill titled "SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - DEMENTIA RESPONSE PROGRAM - FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITION."

This bill, which appropriates \$250,000 from the general fund for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027, represents a pivotal step in addressing the growing needs of individuals and families affected by dementia in North Dakota. Specifically, the appropriation will fund the administration of the dementia response program, behavioral risk factor surveillance models, and the establishment of a full-time equivalent position for a state dementia coordinator.

As someone deeply involved in providing care and resources for those impacted by dementia, I can attest to the urgent need for this investment. A state dementia coordinator will play a critical role in advancing preventative education and reducing stigma surrounding dementia. By fostering greater awareness and understanding of the disease, we can empower individuals, families, and communities to recognize early signs of dementia, seek timely medical intervention, and implement strategies to slow disease progression. This is particularly vital as we consistently see individuals who receive late diagnoses, missing opportunities for earlier intervention that could significantly improve their quality of life and lessen the burden on families and caregivers.

Through our work at Innovative Therapy Solutions & Consulting LLC, we have witnessed firsthand how education and awareness can transform outcomes for individuals living with dementia. By equipping communities with the knowledge and tools to better understand and support this population, we not only enhance individual well-being but also strengthen our communities as a whole.

Additionally, the proposed funding will bolster collaborative efforts between state agencies, healthcare providers, and organizations like ours to deliver comprehensive and coordinated care. This funding will also enhance data collection through behavioral risk factor surveillance models, providing invaluable insights into the prevalence and impact of



dementia in our state. This data will guide future policy and resource allocation, ensuring that we are effectively addressing the needs of our aging population.

Innovative Therapy Solutions & Consulting LLC fully supports this bill and its commitment to establishing a dedicated state dementia coordinator. We believe this position will serve as a vital resource for addressing the complex challenges associated with dementia and will help pave the way for a more informed and supportive North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support this critical legislation to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by dementia across our state.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Dooley

Owner, Innovative Therapy Solutions & Consulting LLC