

Testimony on Long-Term Care Facility Infrastructure Loan Fund
House Human Services Committee
January 28, 2025
HB 1619

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Belinda Moen, Administrator & CEO at Bethel Lutheran Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Williston, ND. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1619 on the critical need for infrastructure improvements in North Dakota's skilled nursing (SNFs) and basic care (BC) facilities.

We have been a staple in the community and the western region of North Dakota as well as the eastern part of Montana for decades. We are currently licensed for 100 skilled and 19 basic care beds and as such are one of the larger nursing facilities within our state. Our building was built in 1949 (*celebrating 76 years this May*) and is showing its age. There has been talk for years about the need for a new facility, and that talk gained speed with the purchase of our new property in 2022. We are currently finalizing plans for that new nursing facility here in Williston.

As I'm sure you are aware, construction costs are extremely high, not only in ND, but nationwide. Those costs are compounded for us here in the Bakken as we see an approximate 15% increase in pricing simply due to location and availability of supplies. Those costs and how they affect funding can make or break a project, especially one of our size and scale. Our projected funding need is \$70 million dollars. We can only bond \$30 million of that total cost and a 1% loan for the initial \$10 million would be a huge help in getting us closer to that goal and getting our project started.

Chairman Ruby, members of the committee, and all involved with this Bill, I urge your support for this program with a **Do Pass** to invest in the future of long-term care in North Dakota. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

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