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Industry, Business and Labor Committee

House Bill 2280 - March 17, 2025

Testimony of Brenda Ruehl, P&A Director Program Services

Greetings Chairman Warrey and members of the Industry, Business and Labor Committee. My name is Brenda Ruehl and I'm a Director of Program Services at the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A). P&A is an independent state agency established in 1977 to assert and advance the human, civil, and legal rights of people with disabilities. The agency's programs and services seek to make positive changes for people with disabilities where we live, learn, work and play.

P&A supports this bill as it supports individuals with disabilities as they seek medical services to maintain and/or regain their health. Many individuals with disabilities need lifelong health care for physical and behavioral health needs and for complex diseases including cancer, cardiac, metabolic, and respiratory diagnoses. This bill would ensure that medical decisions remain between individuals and their doctor, who best know and understand their medical needs.

Obtaining authorization for care and treatment can be complicated, confusing and burdensome to some individuals and they give up. This can seriously impact their current and future health. A delay in care can exacerbate their illness; requiring longer hospitalizations, more expensive treatment, and long-term outcomes that impact their health, employment and longevity. When emergency events can be treated timelier, the need for hospitalizations and serious complications due to delay in authorizing care are reduced. Eliminating prior authorization for emergency medical services ensures individuals receive timely care.

This bill would safeguard against delays and disruptions by streamlining the prior authorization process. It also guarantees continuity of care by honoring prior authorizations for at least 60 days when an enrollee changes insurers. It protects against retrospective denials once approval is granted, it cannot be revoked for 45 business days. This bill provides a regulatory framework that ensures prior authorization is efficient, consistent and in a manner that provides access to medical care in a timely manner.

P&A is in strong support of SB 2280 and request you give a Do Pass on this bill to protect the health of all North Dakota citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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