

Testimony
House Bill No. 1622
Joint Policy Committee
Representative Matthew Ruby and Senator Judy Lee, Co-Chairman
January 21, 2026

Chairman Ruby and Chairman Lee, and members of the Joint Policy Committee, I am Krista Fremming, Interim Director of Medical Services with the Department of Health and Human Services. I appear before you in support of Senate Bill No. 1622 to join the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact, which was introduced as part of North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Program.

Physician Assistants (PAs) fill a critical gap in healthcare delivery across North Dakota. They are essential in addressing provider shortages, particularly in rural and underserved areas. By joining the PA Licensure Compact, North Dakota will make it easier for qualified physician assistants to practice here, thereby increasing access to quality healthcare for our residents.

This compact is designed to strengthen access to medical services while maintaining patient safety, allowing PAs to practice across state lines through mutual recognition of licensure. Preventative measures and oversight are in place to ensure appropriate and safe medical practice in line with PA licensure. It also supports military families by enabling portability of licenses for active-duty personnel and their spouses.

This bill was supported by the interim Rural Health Transformation Committee and incorporated into North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation application where the state was awarded points and approximately \$3.48 million in funding over the 5-year grant based on the intention to pass this legislation. Following through on this commitment is vital to uphold the integrity of the application and advance our shared goal of improving healthcare access statewide.

Joining the PA Compact will position North Dakota as a leader in modernizing healthcare workforce mobility, reducing administrative barriers, and ensuring timely care for patients. I urge the committee to support House Bill No. 1622 and help us take this important step toward improving health outcomes for all North Dakotans.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have.