

Testimony
Senate Bill No. 2402
Joint Policy Committee
Senator Judy Lee and Representative Matthew Ruby, Co-Chairman

January 21, 2026

Chairman Lee and Chairman Ruby, 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. 2402, which was introduced as part of North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Program, relating to the prescriptive authority of pharmacists and therapeutic substitution.

In many North Dakota communities, a pharmacy is the only locally accessible health care institution. Expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to include prescriptive authority and therapeutic substitution will increase access to timely care across the state, especially in rural communities where patients must travel great distances for basic health services.

This legislation will allow pharmacists to prescribe medications for clearly identified common conditions, provide emergency prescriptions when necessary, and substitute therapeutically equivalent drugs when appropriate. The expanded scope maintains patient safety through clear protocols and standards of care.

This bill was incorporated into North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Program application submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the

state was awarded points and funding based on the intention to pass this legislation. The Rural Health Transformation Committee indicated support for the bill and following through on this commitment now is essential to maintaining an estimated \$3.9 million for the 5-year Rural Health Transformation Program and continuing on the trajectory to make North Dakota the healthiest state in the nation.

Expanding pharmacists' scope of practice is a practical solution to address provider shortages and improve health outcomes for North Dakotans. I urge the committee to support Senate Bill No. 2402 and help us take this important step toward a stronger, more accessible health care system.

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