



January 17, 2025  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Education and Environment Division  
Senator Ronald Sorvaag, Chair

**Key Points: Support for SB 2030**

**Homelessness is a growing crisis in Bismarck:** It significantly impacts the health, safety, and well-being of residents and is consistently identified as a top concern through Community Health Needs Assessments.

**Barriers faced by vulnerable populations:** Many individuals experiencing homelessness in Bismarck face challenges such as untreated mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and lack of access to essential services.

**Community-wide impacts:** Homelessness places a significant strain on emergency services, law enforcement, and healthcare systems, making it a pressing issue for the entire community.

**Proposed community solution:** Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health envisions a community triage center to address homelessness, addiction, and mental health. This barrier-free model focuses on providing critical services and building trust within vulnerable populations.

**Importance of SB 2030:** Senate Bill 2030 provides critical funding and a strategic framework to support innovative local solutions like the community triage center, reduce homelessness, and enhance the quality of life in Bismarck.

**Testimony:**

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Education and Environment Division of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2030. My name is Renae Moch and I serve as the Public Health Director for Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health in the City of Bismarck.

Homelessness is an escalating crisis that affects the health, safety, and well-being of our residents and has repeatedly been identified as top concerns in Bismarck through

our Community Health Needs Assessments. Over the past several years, we have observed an increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness, many of whom face significant barriers such as untreated mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and a lack of access to basic services.

This crisis impacts more than just the individuals experiencing homelessness. It strains our emergency services, law enforcement, and healthcare systems. Addressing homelessness effectively requires a multi-pronged, community-based approach that tackles both immediate needs and long-term solutions.

In Bismarck, Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health is leading community efforts to address homelessness through collaboration and innovation. Our vision is to develop a community solution addressing homelessness, addiction, and mental health through a community triage center. This community-based model would offer services without barriers and cultivate trust within vulnerable populations to provide a critical safety net for individuals in crisis.

Senate Bill 2030 represents a crucial step forward in supporting these efforts and ensuring that Bismarck has the tools and resources to address homelessness effectively. It provides the necessary funding and framework to make meaningful progress in reducing homelessness, supporting vulnerable populations, and improving the quality of life for all residents in Bismarck.

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