

Testimony
House Bill 1012 – Department of Health and Human Services Budget
HR Section of Senate Appropriations
Senator Dick Dever, Chair

March 18, 2025

Chair Dever and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lorena Poppe. I am the owner and CEO of Poppy's Promise, a Bismarck-based provider of Developmental Disabilities services, and the current President of the ND Association of Community Providers (NDACP). I am testifying today in support of HB 1012. NDACP is comprised of both large and small providers, newer organizations, and those that have operated for decades. There is diversity in the types of services we provide but we are on common ground when it comes to matters of reimbursement of services, hiring and maintaining quality staff, and providing a sense of belonging and security for the people we support.

We are requesting an inflationary increase for DD providers of 4% and 3% during the 2025-2027 biennium. This request aligns with national inflation levels over the past two years and is essential to the recruitment of employees in a competitive job market. It is also critical to the retention of staff who are already invested in the people they are supporting. Imagine that you have a child or grandchild that is born with a condition that requires complex medical and personal cares. As a family, you learn about services that can be beneficial and often lifesaving. You get connected to a provider whose staff is dedicated to learning and performing intensive procedures, administering medications, and providing the level of care that is expected and deserved. Your whole family gets to know and trust that staff and sees them as a member of the family. Then with very little notice, that staff announces they are leaving to work in a different industry that pays higher and offers more long-term employment stability. Your family member's progress could suffer while introducing and teaching new staff vital procedures. Bonds formed with staff would go away and building trust with new staff will start again. Now imagine having to go through that every four or six months. Without the ability to meet levels of inflation and provide stability we providers are often seeing turnover like that.

NDACP supports action by the House this session to remove mandatory accreditation as a condition of DD licensure. Allowing accreditation to be a voluntary process will give

providers the ability to focus on the many other required quality assurance oversight processes currently in place.

In summary, I urge you to support an inflationary increase that allows our industry to remain competitive and provide stability for those we serve and their families. We thank you for your support of NDACP and our provider members and for hearing the challenges we face as we work to provide the quality of supports and services every person deserves. Thank you for your time today, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Lorena Poppe
CEO, Poppy's Promise
lpoppe@poppyspromise.com