

Senate Appropriations, HR Section

House Bill 1012

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Chairman Dever and members of the committee,

My name is Angela Dinius. I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP). Our members provide essential services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities throughout North Dakota. It is our privilege to do this work, and we are committed to ensuring high-quality care for the people we support. As we often say, we are “doing what matters for people who matter.”

I would like to acknowledge our valued partners, including Tina from the DD Section, Heather and her team at the Life Skills and Transition Center, Donna and her team at Catholic Charities’ Guardianship Division, and our advocacy partners across the state. In this field, we achieve the best outcomes and make the greatest impact when we work together to do what’s best for the people we support.

NDACP has several critical priorities for this budget, and we urge your support for the following:

1. Inflationary Increase of 4% and 3%

Our payment system was designed to be self-sustaining, provided that inflationary increases align with federal inflation levels. We are requesting a 4% and 3% increase, which directly corresponds to the federal inflation rates for the past two years. Without these adjustments, our ability to maintain quality services will be compromised. We do not have another funding source to address these funding gaps. Almost all our funding comes from state dollars matched by Medicaid, with only 0.29% of cases between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, being private pay.

2. Full Funding for ICF and Residential Habilitation Services

Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) and Residential Habilitation (Res Hab) programs are currently funded at only 89.7% and 91.6%, respectively, which limits providers’ ability to cover costs and retain staff. This funding gap undermines the integrity of our system and places undue strain on providers. For example, the payment system is designed to support an average direct support professional (DSP) wage of \$17.96 per hour in ICF settings. However, providers currently pay an average of \$20.81 per hour—nearly \$3 more than the reimbursement rate. Even with this rate, we are still unable to compete with other industries. This makes it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff, ultimately impacting the quality of care for the individuals they support.

Our payment system allows us some flexibility to seek efficiencies, and we have maximized every opportunity to do so. Despite these efforts, we continue to face an unsustainable turnover rate of 45% in residential services and an overall average turnover of 41%. This instability stems, in part, from our inability to offer competitive wages.

To maintain a stable and skilled workforce and ensure the continuity of these essential services, we request full funding for ICF and Residential Habilitation services.

3. Removing the Unfunded Accreditation Mandate

We advocate for accreditation to be a voluntary process, rather than a mandatory, unfunded requirement. While accreditation can be valuable, mandating it without funding diverts already limited resources from direct care. Our services already meet high standards through a variety of state surveys and oversight measures, ensuring accountability and excellence.

4. Supporting Catholic Charities in Their Request for Corporate Guardianship Funding

Corporate guardianship services are vital for individuals with developmental disabilities who do not have anyone else able to serve in this role. Catholic Charities provides a crucial safety net for these individuals, and we strongly support their funding request to ensure they can continue this important work.

Conclusion

The services our providers deliver are life-changing and essential to the well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities. By providing an inflationary increase that matches federal inflation, fully funding ICF and Res Hab services, and eliminating unnecessary financial burdens by making accreditation optional, we can maintain a system that truly meets the needs of those we serve. We appreciate your commitment to making thoughtful investments in these programs, and we look forward to continuing our work together to ensure that North Dakotans with developmental disabilities receive the care and support they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Angela Dinius
Executive Director
ND Association of Community Providers
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North Dakota Association of Community Providers

The following is a list of the 31 provider members of the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP), a statewide association whose members are dedicated to supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). These organizations deliver essential services and supports tailored to meet the diverse needs of individuals with IDD across the state.

4th Corporation

ABLE, Inc.

Alpha Opportunities, Inc.

Anne Carlsen Center

Catholic Charities ND

Community Living Services

Community Options

Development Homes, Inc.

Easter Seals Goodwill ND

Enable, Inc.

Encompass Family Support Services

Fraser

Friendship, Inc.

Grand Forks Growth and Support Center

HAV-IT Services

HIT, Inc.

Kalix

KAYD Home Care

Lake Region Corporation

Life Skills and Transition Center

LISTEN

Open Door Center

Opportunity Foundation

Poppy's Promise

Pride, Inc.

Red River Human Services Foundation

Rehab Services, Inc.

REM-ND, Inc.

Success Unlimited

Triumph, Inc.

Vocational Training Center

