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Chairman Dever and members of the Senate Appropriations – Human Resource Division Committee. My name is Cody Kurtz, and I am the MFP/NDPP Program Director for the Dakota Center for Independent Living. Dakota Center for Independent Living, along with the other three Centers for Independent Living throughout the state of North Dakota have been working with the North Dakota Department of Human Services to provide contractual work for the grant program called the North Dakota Transition and Diversion Pilot Project. This project started out with dollars from COVID and has continued for the last few years. The intentions of the grant program are to assist low-income individuals either on Medicaid, Medicaid Expansion, or receiving services through ND Aging Services Home and Community Based Cares. The program is intended to provide assistance to help keep individuals eligible for the program, living independently in their homes, and preventing them from having to go to a more restrictive environment like a Basic Care or Skilled Nursing Facility.

The program has provided individuals with funding to build ramps onto their homes, do bathroom modifications to make them more accessible for them, and has put in stair lifts. The program also provides assistive equipment for individuals, such as shower chairs, Hoyer lifts, PAL lifts, grab bars, and a number of other equipment that they may not be able to afford themselves. The ultimate goal of the program is to assist individuals to be more independent in their homes for longer and to reduce the need for long term care in a facility setting.

Dakota Center for Independent Living completed 82 diversions through this program from 10/1/2023 to 9/30/2024, the last reporting year for numbers with that program. However, we continue to do the same work this reporting year with similar results.

This program is crucial for residents of North Dakota who are low-income and could not otherwise afford to pay for the items mentioned and would likely need to move into a more restrictive environment. Although Basic Care, Assisted Living, and Skilled Nursing facilities may serve some individuals well, they are not for everyone, and sometimes staying in your own home is the most important place to keep your quality of life high.

Cody Kurtz

MFP/NDPP Program Director

Dakota Center for Independent Living

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