

February 3, 2025

Senate Education Committee

Chairman Beard and members of the Committee,

My name is Tim Mathern, the senator from District 11. I have served the Advisory Council since the legislature created it as we were concerned about the direction of our School of Medicine and Health Sciences. At one point in my legislative career, we almost closed our medical school, now it is one of the best in the nation focused on rural health care.

I am a sponsor of SB 2286, and we have people here to give you the details so my comments will be general. I see this bill as the next step in health care leadership in North Dakota.

Our first step was many years ago to establish a one mill statewide property tax support of the SMHS into the constitution. Check it out sometime Section 10 of Article 10.

Step two was building a beautiful and functional school of medicine ten years ago.

Now I am asking you to deliver step three, passage of SB 2286. This might be the most important and most consequential!

1. This step brings our health care education and research under one roof wherein we train people not just in specific fields but to learn and work within the concept of a health care team. This is the world of health care and those who can't work in a team do not survive in our community health care institutions.
2. A second ingredient of this bill is incorporating Artificial Intelligence into health care. This will benefit every health education program in our state.
3. A third ingredient of the bill is taking full advantage of the new skills and energy of our new Dean, Dr. Majorie Jenkins. We worked hard to get her and we are fortunate that our retiring Dean, Dr. Wynne, is supportive and engaged.

I ask for a Do Pass recommendation for SB 2286. Thank you for your dedication to our state and your leadership on this critical issue.