

Testimony Prepared for the
Senate Human Services Committee

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RE: HB 1485 Personal Needs Allowance for Eligible Beneficiaries.

Chairlady Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee. I am Maurice Hardy, Director of Dakota Central Human Service Zone, which includes the counties of McLean, Mercer, Oliver, and Sheridan. In addition, I am a member of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here to provide testimony in support of the bill for Personal Needs Allowance for Eligible Beneficiaries.

Prior to my position as director of Dakota Central I was a Home and Community based case manager, 6 years in Golden Valley/Billings County, 2 years with Dakota Central Social Service District until 2020 when it became a zone and Case Managers became North Dakota State employees, which I was for almost another 3 years.

In that time, I would meet with our aged population and complete assessments and determine eligibility for the program and find out what assistance they needed to remain in their own homes. To my clients, staying in their own place and independent was their primary goal and also mine.

In that time, I met your average North Dakotan, determined, independent, and not wanting to be a burden. Little things met so much to them, such being able to shop for items they wanted or needed. A lot of the times it was for a birthday card for a family member, grandchild or great grandchild. Many times, I suspect they put a dollar or two in there from their meager income.

Many of these wonderful people had some personal items, like a certain lotion, soap, shampoo, etc.... that not only did they like, but seemed to be best for their skin, hair, and oral mouth care. Some have a favorite snack or treat that is no longer affordable. Basic care facilities cannot be expected to provide those specific items that a person prefers or wants for their personal care and residents use what is provided.

These wonderful people I worked with never really wanted to go to a basic care facility until they knew that was the safest place for them. For many to give up that independence of living in their own home was a very hard decision for them and their families and had some effect on their self-esteem.

They find out that they are allowed \$100 @ month for those personal items that brought them comfort. Being able to purchase clothing items they like, to a lotion, shampoo, toothpaste, a special treat, that has become a part of their life, becomes a costly item. They either do without or need to ask for help from a family member or friend, which is

hard. Imagine asking one of your children for \$10.00 so you can buy Birthday or Christmas cards, new socks, or underwear.

With inflation that has occurred in the last few years, \$100.00 does not go as far as it did four or five years ago. \$110.00 is a little better and will allow small purchases that give a little comfort to those that lead a proud independent life.

We believe this small increase in personal needs allowance for eligible beneficiaries with it tied inflation will let them know they are not forgotten and give a little more comfort. We ask for a DO PASS on HB 1485 and thank you for your time. I will stand for any questions.