

SB 2076 Testimony
Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman
January 14, 2025

Chairman Lee and members of the committee, my name is Carlotta McCleary. I am the Executive Director for both North Dakota Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NDFFCMH) and Mental Health America of North Dakota (MHAND).

NDFFCMH is a parent run organization focused on the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders and their families. MHAND's mission is to promote mental health through education, advocacy, understanding and access to quality care for all individuals.

We have concerns about SB 2076. NDFFCMH and MHAND continue to be supportive of the current law regarding the carve out for mental health medication. It is our belief that the prescribing of mental health medication must be between the individual and their doctor. We are also concerned with delays in appropriate treatment that a drug utilization review process would require. We know the sooner people receive the appropriate treatment the better. For example, with depression, we know that the longer it goes untreated, the worse the depression gets. The longer the depression lasts, it is more difficult to get back to the baseline, with some people never returning to baseline due to the length of time with untreated symptoms. There could also be additional negative consequences. Anything that delays the stabilization of the individual can lead to a decrease in family and other social interactions, an increase in hospitalizations, an increase in out-of-home placements, increased encounters with law enforcement,

increased risk for suicide, or a decrease in school attendance and academic achievement.

Decisions must be maintained between the doctor and their patient.

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