

Testimony Prepared for the  
**The North Dakota Senate Human Services**  
**Senate Bill 2190 Relating to medical assistance benefits**  
January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
By: Chelsea Flory, Burleigh County Human Service Zone Director

Chair Lee, and members of the North Dakota Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Cheslea Flory, and I serve as the Director for the Burleigh County Human Service Zone, which includes the county of Burleigh. Additionally, I am a member of the North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association. I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2190 relating to medical assistance benefits.

Human Service Zones serve as a custodial agent for youth in foster care and it is our responsibility to ensure those youth receive appropriate interventions, determining these through collaboration with medical and mental health providers. Human Service Zones serve complex youth who have experienced childhood trauma and may be entering care with unmet medical or behavioral needs. As a result, these youth can experience disruption in placement, additional trauma, placement in residential facilities or increased behaviors resulting in delinquency charges. As a legal custodian, these complex youth continue to be the highest priority as we work diligently to stabilize placement and initiate appropriate services in community bases settings, with the ultimate goal of supporting families with reunification in safe and healthy environments.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy offers numerous benefits for individuals and their caregivers such as: skill development, behavior improvement planning, enhances social skills, increased independence, and individualized treatment plans tailored to the needs of the individual. These personalized services could encompass

supports with independent living skills, communication, development of healthier coping mechanisms and managing daily stressors. ABA services and the ability to create individualized service plans supports a more effective approach for therapy, ensuring targeted interventions and specific training for caregivers and educational supports. ABA therapy is the trauma informed care approach towards behavior modification. This encourages positive behavioral changes by identifying and reinforcing preferred behaviors and helping the individual to develop healthier and safer coping skills. This could include relaxation techniques, problem solving skills, self-regulations of their own behavior or emotion, and social skills to improve relationships.

SB 2190 would allow for medical assistance coverage to include payment for ABA services in both the assessment and treatment of individuals with a variety of psychological and medical diagnosis. As a designated legal custodian for youth in foster care I have seen many of the complex youth I previously referred to benefit from services such as ABA therapy. This has helped with stabilization, resulting in more successful treatment interventions and residential placement in community-based settings. The North Dakota Human Service Zone Director Association supports the passage of this bill and thanks you for your time and consideration; I stand for questions from the committee.