

Senate Human Services Committee
Judy Lee, Chair
Senate Bill 2192
Monday, January 20, 2025

Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lorena Poppe. I am the President of the ND Association of Community Providers (NDACP) and the owner/CEO of Poppy's Promise, a provider of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2192 and to thank the sponsors for bringing this bill forward.

Accreditation is currently mandated as a condition of being licensed as a provider through the Developmental Disabilities Section of the ND Department of Health & Human Services (NDDHHS). Until just over 18 months ago and for many years, the cost of accreditation was funded by NDDHHS. I understood this to be because it is a requirement of the state. Since July 1, 2023, providers have been expected to shoulder the burden of accreditation expense which, in the Spring of 2023, was estimated to be just over \$640,000 for the 2023-2025 biennium. Individual provider cost for accreditation can be upwards of \$30,000 or more depending on the size of the organization. This type of expense is simply not affordable, especially for small organizations with limited revenue or those new to the industry. It can feel for many providers that they are being penalized for wanting to build organizations to provide critical support and services for people with disabilities.

As an association, NDACP is asking that accreditation no longer be mandated as there are a number of other quality measures in place to address the areas covered by accreditation. If it continues to be a mandate for DD services, it only makes sense for the state to again assume the cost of accreditation as providers will still be dealing with the significant administrative burden created by the accreditation process. Discussions about accreditation that I've been involved in as the President of NDACP have brought more questions than answers. Are other services within NDDHHS required to be accredited? Is the state providing funding for accreditation outside of the DD Section?

As the committee works through this important bill, please know that NDACP and many individual providers are available and willing to provide additional information that may be needed by the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Lorena Poppe
Poppy's Promise