

Senate Human Services Committee

Madame Chairman Lee and Committee Members,

My name is Tim Mathern, Senator from District 11 in Fargo. I am the prime sponsor of SB 2316 which I introduced at the request of citizens in North Dakota. The intent of the bill is that we provide and pay for individuals who need nursing home level ventilator care or nursing home level psychiatric care in the state. The draft is somewhat unclear, probably needing some amending to meet the purpose which I will focus on.

I introduced this measure for three main reasons.

1. My conversations suggest that some nursing homes are not able or not willing to care for some individuals who are from their community.
2. I know some individuals with complex health needs are left at institutions like the state hospital, private hospitals, or referred out of state even though loved by people in their home community that is not able to serve them.
3. I believe your committee, the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, and our private nursing home providers could arrive at a manner to keep our citizens within a reasonable distance of their home community. The concept of four regional centers is just one idea of creating scale that makes services available closer to home. It could be more or less, just so care is available around the state.

I understand your committee is also working on creative ways for individuals with complex health care needs to receive care in their home. I support those programs as a primary response leaving this bill as only a secondary solution. I also understand there are workforce issues but these can be addressed by higher reimbursement. The market works, I know a solution will cost money. Through the Appropriations Committee I will work to get you the money for the positive outcome you design.

Others are here to testify. I ask you for a Do Pass recommendation on SB 2316.