



North Dakota Legislative Assembly
600 E Boulevard Ave Dept 14
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly,

I am writing to express my **opposition to SB 2357** regarding the proposed consolidation of the mental health boards in North Dakota into a single governing board. While I understand that this proposal aims to streamline operations and potentially enhance efficiency, it is essential to consider the implications such a change may have on the diverse needs of our communities and the effectiveness of mental health services across the state.

North Dakota is home to a wide range of communities, each with unique characteristics and varying mental health needs. The existing system of multiple mental health boards allows for localized governance and the ability to tailor services to meet the specific requirements of different populations. Consolidating these boards into a single entity could risk diminishing this localized approach, potentially leading to a one-size-fits-all model that may not adequately serve all communities.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that different mental health professions adhere to their own ethical codes and standards of practice. These codes are designed to guide professionals in their work and ensure that they uphold the highest standards of care for their clients. A single governing board may face challenges in honoring the diverse ethical frameworks that exist within the mental health profession. This could lead to conflicts or inconsistencies in policy and practice, ultimately affecting the quality of care provided to individuals seeking mental health services.

Additionally, the transition to a consolidated board may lead to challenges during the implementation phase. Concerns regarding governance, accountability, and representation are vital to consider. License holders from diverse backgrounds and regions may feel their voices are not adequately represented in a larger, centralized system. The increase in efficiency does not always correlate with the improvement in healthcare.

I encourage you to thoroughly evaluate the potential consequences of this consolidation and recommend a **Do Not Pass on SB 2357**.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I appreciate your dedication to improving mental health services in our state and urge you to consider the diverse perspectives involved in this discussion.

Sincerely,

Ashley Thompson, M.Ed., LPCC-SUP C-AAIS
President