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**GRAND FORKS
COUNTY STATE'S
ATTORNEYS OFFICE**

Memo

To: North Dakota Legislative Management
Interim Long-Term Care Committee
From: Peter D. Welte, Grand Forks County State's Attorney
Date: July 13, 2010
Re: Delinquency of Nursing Facility Resident Accounts

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am before you this morning at the invitation of the Chair, to present to you on the topic of delinquent nursing facility resident accounts. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning about this topic.

As Grand Forks County State's Attorney, I have been involved—for the past couple of years—in the "Later in Life Project". This project is a coordinated multi-disciplinary effort involving my office, the Community Violence Intervention Center, Local Law Enforcement, and Local Adult Protective Services.

There have been a few primary focal points to this project. One focal point involves training law enforcement to identify and investigate all aspects of elder-abuse, including but not limited to financial exploitation. To that end, we have conducted 3 trainings in the past 1 ½ years for local and regional law enforcement, and have done so with much success. Referrals to my office for elder abuse have increased since those trainings, and the quality of the investigation, and accordingly the success of prosecution, has increased, as well.

Another focal point of the project has been community education. I have spoken to long-term care facilities, and many local service clubs and organizations, including the Greater Grand Forks County Bar Association, in the past year. Our other team members have participated in other outreach and education efforts. The result of this outreach is an increase in community awareness and referral for such matters for criminal prosecution.

Finally, there has been a focus on educating various justice partners that these types of cases are no longer viewed by law enforcement as only "civil matters". To be sure, many of these cases still will be only heard in a civil court, but many more are now proceeding through the criminal system thanks to this project. It has been successful on a local basis, and we continue to spread the word on a statewide basis regarding what we are doing with this project, and how it has been a positive and successful experience for us in Grand Forks County.

Thank you for your time and your consideration this morning.