

PRESENTATION**To****LONG TERM CARE INTERIM COMMITTEE
NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****By****Eric Monson, CEO
Anne Carlsen Center
September 28, 2010**

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, for the record, my name is Eric Monson. I am the CEO of the Anne Carlsen Center in Jamestown, ND. You have invited comments from those of us that serve the needs and desires of those special kids and young adults around the State that live with various forms of developmental disabilities – a work we feel blessed to do for them as part of a team with you. Through the gracious heart of each of you as policy makers, we and our other colleague providers proudly do that work to make their lives healthier and happier.

When HB 1556 was passed in the 2009 Legislative Session, this Assembly unanimously recognized that there was a need to seriously explore the system that funds DD services in this State through the approximate 33 private providers like the Anne Carlsen Center. This need for a study was because the funding and therefore the resultant services provided to care for these DD clients is inequitable, lacks standardization and doesn't meet the broad variety of needs faced by

folks with such complex physical medical and emotional circumstances of life.

As the final results of the HB 1556 study clearly recognized, a “one-size-fits-all” funding approach simply is as unfair as it is unrealistic in meeting the broad and complex array of needs of such a varying mix of issues. Actually, the 2009 Legislative Assembly and particularly the sponsors of HB 1556 recognized that inequity and thus recognized the duty to study the issues and develop solutions to fix that inequity.

As the final report by Burns and Associates (“B&A”) indicates (at page 5 and elsewhere), the reimbursement system for DD services in North Dakota is a retrospective, cost-based reimbursement system that often takes 2+ years in which to finally “settle” with your providers. For example, it is not unusual for the Anne Carlsen Center to annually “carry” or “finance” hundreds of thousands of dollars for a period of 18+ months until a final audit and settlement is reached with DHS and we are paid the balance due for our care of those we serve for you. Of course, we are fortunate to have a Foundation to tap in order to help the Center financially carry the cost in this fashion under the current system. Many other community service providers do not have such a safety net. Yet, it is still unfair to require any organization to even partially carry this financial obligation. B&A spoke to this issue in their final report.

So you have some recommendations from B&A to consider. At the time I prepared these remarks, I did not have the advanced benefit of the

Department's comments to you today. However, you have come to expect from the Anne Carlsen Center something more than corporate lethargy. You expect us to keep you honestly updated and informed and accordingly to serve you as a recognized team member in this challenging, but vital task of properly funding the care of those that need us. Therefore, I have the following general and preliminary observations for you to consider, based upon my analysis of the data and conclusions of the B&A study:

- 1. It is evident that a different assessment method is required to determine the resources needed to adequately support an individual.**
- 2. Given our often-stated objective of matching the time within which we provide services with the payment for those services, it would appear from the B&A study that a perspective payment independent rate model system would be the most effective and efficient method for both the State and the providers.**
- 3. The Anne Carlsen Center stands ready to be part of the "Child SSI" validation phase referenced on page 23 of the B&A Final Report.**
- 4. Option "D" as presented by B&A on page 23 of their Final Report is also worthy of exploration regarding the provision of services to children.**

Regardless of how you consider or respond to the B&A Final Report, I hope you consider making some course corrections to a system that begs

for correction or modifications. Please be assured that the Anne Carlsen Center will always be prepared to provide to you as policy makers the benefit of our experience and observational support in this vital task. We will be available to you when and if you ask for any comments – and perhaps even when you don't.

I personally invite each of you to tour our facility the next time you travel through Jamestown. You have an open invitation. Chat with the kids whom we serve. Ask questions of our specialized pediatric physicians, nurses, therapists, life skills trainers and the many other caregivers that complete the care teams for the folks we serve. They will all be flattered that you came and will take all the time you require to inform you about what we do and how we do it. Call if you can to be sure we can give you the best experience possible, or simply show up unannounced. Either way is fine.

Finally, I offer my thanks to you for allowing the Anne Carlsen Center to perform its mission, along with all the other community providers that do likewise. As you know, without your public policy support, including your funding support, we would not exist to do the work you require us to do - for those of our residents that need our care. Thank you. We will be in touch in the near future and during the Session.

**Eric Monson, CEO
Anne Carlsen Center**