

Chairman Keiser and committee members I am Cheryl Rising, FNP and here to represent the NDNPA. I am an independent nurse practitioner bringing health care out to the geriatric population in assisted living areas in Bismarck, ND.

* ND has taken strides in the last several legislative sessions to ensure that our state is well positioned to get the full benefit from its primary care provider workforce. Our state-lead efforts in the 2011 legislative session to modernizing the regulation of nurse practitioner practice laws have opened the potential to improve access to care, control costs and improve the quality and timeliness of care across our state.

* As our state looks to implement new programs that restructure and reframe how care is delivered in North Dakota, it is imperative that we continue to keep our focus on creating flexible, sustainable programs that will incorporate today's full complement of ND's health provider workforce and have the capacity to easily adapt to health care advances and workforce changes.

* Many of the challenges that our current health systems and reimbursement platforms encounter are related to outdated regulations and structures that have failed to keep pace with the advancements in the field of health care and/or were too slow and inflexible to respond. To this end, the ND NPA has several recommendations that will ensure that the limitations of the past are not replicated in the new models of the future. The following are a few recommendations:

1. Adopt the provider neutral language and definition of primary care provider as established in the federal ACA language in all implementation efforts and seek to amend current ND law to this uniform standard
2. Include the option to select a nurse practitioner for their primary care provider as an essential benefit in our health exchange requirements
3. Fully implement the provider non-discrimination provision of ACA Section 2706 to ensure that insurance plans provide for an individual's option to select the health care provider of their choice so that ND can capture the full provider workforce
4. Establish requirements for accountable care organizations that provide for the full incorporation of nurse practitioner practices and their patients

* ND has taken strong steps toward positioning our state's health care infrastructure in the last several years. The step toward diversity of health discipline stakeholders around the table has strengthened our state's ability to implement the ACA requirements and understanding to develop state answers to our local needs. The ND NPA would welcome the opportunity to further dialog on the ND NPA recommendations and extends the offer to voluntarily serve on committees or boards that provide recommendations to the ND legislature, regulators and governor's office on these matters.

I also want to give recognition to Gwen Witzel, FNP and regional director for AANP and Taynin Kopanos legislative assistant for AANP in preparation of this testimony.

Thank you Cheryl Rising, FNP