

Good morning Chairman Weisz and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Jason Wahl, Director of the Division of Medical Marijuana within the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH). I am here to support the changes in House Bill 1359 regarding removal of the designated caregiver application fee and increasing the number of designated caregivers. I will also provide information related to the fiscal note submitted by the NDDoH.

Currently, to become a designated caregiver an applicant must pay \$41.25 for a criminal history record check as well as a \$50 non-refundable application fee. While the NDDoH initially receives the payment for the criminal history record check, the payment is directly sent to the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation with fingerprints. In certain situations, having to pay both fees may pose a burden on some families. The NDDoH supports the removal of the \$50 designated caregiver application fee. This may lead to an increase of designated caregivers in the program which can be beneficial for a number of registered qualifying patients. The fiscal note submitted for this bill identified a decrease in revenue of \$22,250 for the 2021-23 biennium and a decrease of \$25,150 for the 2023-25 biennium.

A registered qualifying patient is allowed to have one designated caregiver registered under the program. The proposed change will allow a qualifying patient to have up to three designated caregivers. The NDDoH supports this change as there are circumstances where allowing only one designated caregiver causes concern. For example, in the case of separated or divorced parents, the proposed change would allow each parent to be a registered designated caregiver. The fiscal note submitted identified an increase of expenditures of \$4,000 for the 2021-23 biennium. This is the estimated programming costs necessary for the information technology system (BioTrackTHC).

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.