

March 1, 2021

Dear Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD), I am writing you in support of SB 2085, relating to expanding the Medicaid Primary Care Provider definition to include a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM). CHAD is a non-profit membership organization that serves as the Primary Care Association for North Dakota and South Dakota, supporting community health centers (CHCs) in their mission to provide access to quality health care for all Dakotans.

SB 2085 would allow CNMs to serve as Primary Care Providers (PCPs) for the purposes of the Medicaid program. Under Medicaid, only PCPs are allowed to provide referrals for specialty services. If that referral isn't in place, Medicaid does not pay for the specialty services that are provided and the patient is responsible for the bill. Allowing CNMs to serve as PCPs would enable them to refer patients for specialty services related pregnancy and women's health care. For example, if a CNM is providing prenatal care and the patient needs to be referred for an ultrasound or specialty care related to the pregnancy, the CNM would be able to make that referral. The ability to make those referrals are in the normal scope of practice for a CNM.

Current rules state if a CNM needs to make a referral for specialty care, they must have another provider's name on the referral. This becomes bothersome to the other providers because the health concerns on the referral relate to issues they have not seen the patient for. It is troubling for the CNM because the results or consult reports then get routed to the other provider which can create delays in appropriate care and follow up. If the CNM forgets and signs their own name instead of the other provider, the patient can then get billed for the cash cost of the visit. These challenges could be avoided by expanding the Medicaid PCP definition to include a CNM.

In summary, CNMs are valuable clinicians on the primary health care team, and CHAD supports SB 2085 and asks that the House Human Services Committee recommend a do pass.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Shelly Ten Napel, CEO
Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas