

House Judiciary | Representative Lawrence Klemin – Chairman
Testimony per House Bill 1117 | January 13, 2021

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary, my name is Margo Haut. I am here today to testify in opposition to House Bill 1117.

Introduction

I am Founder & Director of “Guardian Angels, Inc”, a nonprofit founded in 2014 and located in Jamestown, ND. Our slogan is “Putting People First” with the vision of providing services, being available 24/7 and giving a voice to those who cannot advocate for themselves.

I am a National Certified Guardian & certified per the ND Guardianship Training. I am President & Member of GAND - Guardianship Association of ND and the ND State Affiliate & Member of the National Guardianship Association. I also am a Licensed Social Worker in ND with extensive experience via mental illness and/or treatment regimes.

Role as Guardian per Consent to Involuntary Treatment via Prescribed Medication

On behalf of Guardian Angels, Inc., it is a privilege to serve as Guardian for our Protected Persons.

As Guardian, the most challenging times consists of a Protected Person exhibiting out of control behaviors being a danger to self and/or other persons.

As Guardian, I have an obligation to my Protected Persons to keep them and those around them, safe from harm.

As Guardian, one option to keep our Protected Person safe consists of being admitted to the North Dakota State Hospital. Staff of the NDSH provide communication and/or treatment options on a regular basis to assist in meeting our Protected Persons overall psychiatric and/or medical needs.

As Guardian, my experience of potential consent for involuntary treatment via a prescribed medication being sought for a Protected Person at the NDSH does not occur on a regular or frequent basis. The request of potential authorization consists of extensive review and/or discussion of treatment options with the Protected Person’s Medical Team of the NDSH including the potential considered medication’s side effects and timeframe of the involuntary treatment via the med prior to providing consent.

As noted, Guardian Angels, Inc. launched in 2014. During our initial years, the experience our Protected Persons journeyed when deemed in potential need of involuntary treatment

via a prescribed medication consisted of lengthy timeframes sometimes days prior to the granting of authority for the administration of the medication. This resulted in our Protected Person living in anguish, at times, challenging safety for themselves and/or others providing care and supervision.

As Guardian, this Authority to provide consent for involuntary treatment via prescribed medications is taken very serious. Progress is monitored per continued communication with the Protected Person's Medical Team of the NDSH. It should be noted that our Protected Persons have experienced the discontinuation of the involuntary treatment via prescribed medication with successful transitions to less restrictive environments.

Chairman Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary, thank you for your time.

I respectfully ask the House Judiciary to oppose House Bill 1117 as it would deter the opportunity for a Guardian to assist the Protected Person in their time of need.