

Teva Lange
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My name is Teva Lange. I was born and raised in North Dakota and work as a Licensed Addiction Professional for the ND Department of Corrections. This letter finds you in efforts to show my support for the North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) organization and its impact for my family and myself. My first experience with brain injury (BI) comes from a caregiver/family member role. I married a wonderful man in 2004 who at the age of 23 suffered from an aneurysm as a result from a rupture of an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) within his brain. He underwent a cerebral surgery and as a result experienced a stroke needing intensive speech and physical therapy in 2001. I did not know him at the time of his injury, and by the time I met him he was working full time and appeared “normal.” His injury was invisible to me, but not to him. My lack of knowledge and empathy to his daily struggles caused conflict and frustration early in our marriage. NDBIN for me started for personal reasons; however, this organization has fostered my desire to learn and helped me professionally bring resources and awareness to clients I work with, coworkers, peers, family and friends.

NDBIN provides a wealth of resources to our state. Of these resources, I would like to provide a brief summary of how I have personally utilized and gained from this program/organization.

- Since 2016, I have subscribed and received educational newsletters on brain injury, which I use as a personal and professional resource to provide to family members, colleagues, and clients in the DOCR.
- NDBIN has personally come into the Department of Corrections and provided presentations on brain injury to residents housed there.
- In 2019, I was part of the first Certified Brain Injury Specialist Training and received my CBIS certificate. Since then I have access to network and refer out to at least 60 or more certified professionals because of their trainings.
- In 2020, staff within the NDBIN encouraged myself and other colleagues to apply for a scholarship to attend the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) Conference. With their encouragement, I submitted an application and awarded the scholarship.
- Lastly and most importantly. **I have referred countless clients to this support network.** I work with a high percentage of clients in the prison setting that are impacted by brain injury. Some of the times, they do not even consider their brain as injured or have not been informed. Overdose (lack of oxygen), being knocked out in a fight, extreme drug use, any risk behavior where their head was jarred, or even the reality of them falling as a child. All these could be a factor causing a ripple impact of impulsiveness decisions, struggle in school/comprehension, or difficulty in managing emotion. This understanding and pairing up with their history is the awareness needed to start the process of learning to manage how to live with a brain injury.

The ability to refer clients that are getting out of prison to resources in their community (print off support group meetings, provide a phone number to someone who understands brain injury and provide basic understanding/information about brain injury to spark their awareness) is priceless.

The North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) has been a great resource for personal and professional reasons. With education and awareness I have been able to be a better spouse and a better professional to the clients I work with. My hope is to continue to grow in my understanding and to help others be more aware of expectations/management strategies that will assist both the BI survivor and those that care for them.

Therefore, here is where I need your help and support. It is my understanding that there is a proposal to reduce the North Dakota Brain Injury Network funding by 50%. **I ask that you reconsider this proposal and restore the brain injury funding in HB 1012.** Governor Burgum has made such a strong initiative in our great state with fighting for awareness, decreasing stigma and more resources for people that suffer from the disease of addiction. A high percentage of those people to live in "RECOVERY" means coping/managing and getting support. I encourage you to read and speak with NDBIN on the impact of Brain Injury not only on the person but on their family/care givers. You will see that *a person who suffers from brain injury is not just suffering acutely, but **chronically**.* If you are a supporter of RECOVERY please understand that NDBIN offers support to those striving to live in RECOVERY and again, **I ask that you reconsider this proposal and restore the brain injury funding in HB 1012.**

Thank you for your time and consideration in addressing this concern. This organization means a lot to me. In 2015, my husband Rick, was found to have another AVM located his brain and since has gone through two radio knife surgeries without success. He is now on disability at the age of 42. He actively is being treated for seizures, migraines, and anxiety. He underwent testing scoring below functioning level within physical and mental means. He is stable, however we are going to be addressing in the near future a cerebral surgery to remove his AVM. The amount of effort and support needed as a caregiver has been all encompassing. NDBIN and their staff have been an outlet in allowing me to understand how to best help my husband. For the clients I work with that may not have the support my husband has NDBIN is there for them. Please help me in advocating for continued APPROPRIATE funding for them to maintain the work they do. If you have any questions feel free to contact me in the future.

Sincerely,



Teva Jo Lange, LCAC CBIS
Licensed Clinical Addiction Counselor
Certified Brain Injury Specialist

To Whom it May Concern,

It has come to my attention that funding cuts are having a drastically amount of the needed funding being considered for the ND Brain Injury Network.

I have had the impacts of several different types of head injuries in my 70 years. In the beginning of my injuries at the age of 15 or 16 it has been a psychological nightmare to live with. The struggles I had growing through the different injuries and not having any type of help for healing and recovering. There are still struggles I live with daily, for instance trying to write this letter so that you can understand or realize how greatly this funding is needed to be able to continue its guiding me with resources that are not available. Especially in this rural western part of the state, on our reservations and to reach other people who have no knowledge of what life has been or is like for me or others who live with this.

I am telling you about how their programs help support me. I am one of North Dakota's American Indians who uses their online support groups, and the webinars of their education for people who have experienced, lived through and struggle living with these very difficult traumatic brain injuries(concussions) that people, doctors, hospitals, educators, legal systems, schools and a whole list of other offices, programs that haven't any knowledge of how to help us. I have been a part of this Brain Injury Network since it has begun. Since Rebecca Quinn has been in the office I have seen this program expand enormously and hoping for it to continue for me and it's reaching onto the reservations and other American Indians that live off the reservations, including the educating of all the legal and legislative systems.

I am asking for your consideration of the greatly needed funding of this Brain Injury Network.

Sincerely,

Skipp Miller

Still alive and functional



North Dakota Legislators,

My name is Carma Hanson and I am the Coordinator of Safe Kids Grand Forks, an injury prevention coalition based out of Altru Health System in Grand Forks. Our mission is to reduce the number of unintentional injuries and deaths to children under age 19 – their leading cause of death. Safe Kids Grand Forks has a coverage area that includes northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota and through our efforts, we partner with many agencies that conduct like-type work. Together, we have over 250 parents and colleagues that assist in our work to keep kids safe at home, at school, at play and on the way.

The North Dakota Brain Injury Network (NDBIN) is one of our partner agencies and together, we collaborate on many projects related to brain injuries. As you can imagine, brain injuries in children can occur in a number of ways, including preventable injuries such as sports concussions, falls from playground equipment or bike and car crashes. Our work as Safe Kids Grand Forks is to prevent those injuries from happening and we share that mission with the NDBIN. Once an injury has occurred, they then take over with the wonderful work that they do to assist clients with services, provide support for living with a brain injury, assist with support for the caregivers of those with brain injuries and connect the client with support and resources to help them in their recovery process.

The work that this group does is outstanding and I would encourage you to reconsider the funding allocation that has been presented in the DHS Funding Bill 1012. This proposal suggests a 50% reduction in funding for the NDBIN. While we are in a time when all funding needs to be carefully considered, I would caution that this drastic cut could have significant impacts on those suffering from brain injuries. This type of injury is complicated and careful intervention and rehabilitation is critical to those inflicted with this type of trauma. Safe Kids Grand Forks and our team have benefited greatly from the work of the NDBIN as they educate providers on concussion and brain injury management and help set protocols for coaches, teachers, athletic trainers and others involved with kids with TBI's. They also provide direct services to clients across the state as they navigate the very complicated world of living with a brain injury.

Rebecca Quinn, the Program Director for the NDBIN can speak eloquently about the services that are provided from kids – adults in their program. She has established a network of care and resources across the state that assists people of all ages, injury severities and income levels. The impact of a financial cut to the extent suggested would significantly impact their programming abilities and I would challenge you to reconsider that proposal.

I thank you for your time to read this letter of support for the North Dakota Brain Injury Network. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have further questions that I can address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carma Hanson".

Carma Hanson, MS, RN

Coordinator – Safe Kids Grand Forks

It is great to have such a wealth of resources and your work in coordinating all of it is much appreciated!

Amy Brossart-Robinson, M.S., CCC-SLP
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders
University of North Dakota (UND)

Thank you! I also wanted to thank you for all the work you are doing across our state for those with brain injury and providers. Really helpful and impressive, thanks so much!!~ It has been crazy. We are still seeing everyone by telemedicine, which has proven quite effective. Also great to be able to address initiation, planning and really all areas of cognitive and executive functioning in patients natural environments. Anyway, we are fortunate to be able to carry one, even in this bizarre times. Have a happy and healthy Holiday!! Thanks,

Janet Grove, MS CCC-SLP, CBIS
Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist
Certified Brain Injury Specialist
Progressive Therapy Associates

During these trying COVID times of stress and negativity, the Pollyanna in me wants to spread cheer!

Thank you for all that you do to elevate the lives of those with BI. Each time I am on calls with you I am SO impressed. You show genuine compassion, insight and kindness to those you talk to. I have wondered if people treat me kindly because I'm "brain damaged", but I truly believe that you treat everyone kind because that is who you are.

Thank you,

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I continue to see how active NDBIN is in this crazy time. I keep hoping that hospital admissions will slow down but like the entire State of ND hospitals, we are overrun. I was still working last night and already know today will be no different. You continue to have great topics and meetings. I just have not been able to attend. Just wanted you to know it is not due to lack of interest or support.

Marie Brekken, PA-C
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
Sanford Health Fargo