

Madam Chairman Lee and Members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Anna Friedt and I work as a primary care nurse in Dickinson. As a native to North Dakota, I have seen first hand how access to health care can positively and negatively affect the health of a community. As a rural state, patients often have to travel lengthy distances to see specialists and receive the specific care they need. Oftentimes, patients end up locked in to specific networks, which does not take into account the very specific needs of each individual patient. As a nurse, I help patients with out of network referrals, and advocate to get them the care they need and deserve. It is frustrating to see patients forced to travel farther distances, and change providers they have known for years because it is dictated by insurance. Patient care should come first, and passing HB 1465 will help make that even more of a reality.

As a patient myself, I have also seen the problem caused by insurance networks. I have been a patient at the Bone and Joint Center for several years. Shortly after having a surgical procedure, my insurance plan dropped the Bone and Joint Center from their list of in network providers. As a result, I have had to send several appeals into my insurance company. My primary care provider has had to do the same. I was able to advocate for myself, the same way I advocate for my patients, but not all patients are able to do this. As a patient, we should be able to see the providers who know us and whom we trust without worrying about the out of network costs.

I love my job and the people I work with. I care about my patients and my community. We should not have to change jobs and insurance companies, in order to receive the care we need. North Dakotans deserve the ability to advocate for themselves and choose their providers. Everyone has the right to receive the best care possible, regardless of insurance and networks. I urge you to vote yes on HB 1465.

Respectfully,

Anna Friedt, RN-BSN