

Good Morning Senator Lee and members of the committee,

I am Amanda Ihmels, RDN, CSO, LRD I am from Bismarck and the current president of the North Dakota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (NDAND). NDAND represents approximately 250 dietitians practicing in North Dakota. I am here today to testify in support of SB 2187. The ND Board of Dietetic Practice has been working to modernize and clarify our licensure law as it has been 35 years since it was created. This bill provides many improvements, but today I will highlight 3.

The update to this law includes consistent language with dietetic practice today. Such as medical nutrition therapy, the nutrition care process, and what general nutrition services may consist of. This provides clear guidance for licensed and unlicensed individuals for what nutrition services can and cannot be provided. Having this clarification will make it easier for North Dakotans to identify those who are practicing appropriately and quickly identify those who are not.

Additional updates include the expanded pathways to licensure. The ND Board of Dietetic Practice has defined education requirements, supervised practice and board exam requirements to practice Medical Nutrition Therapy. This allows for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists and other qualified individuals to safely practice in our state. Expanding and defining the requirements to practice medical nutrition therapy holds all practitioners to an elevated standard to ensure that clients/patients continue to receive adequate and safe nutrition information.

Lastly, the updates include expansion into telehealth for Medical Nutrition Therapy. This allows for short and long term practice abilities for those outside of our state providing medical nutrition therapy to North Dakotans.

After practicing dietetics for 11 years I have seen the harm of individuals from outside our state. A recent example is a young cancer patient being coached on an "alternative treatment" regimen where she juiced and drank 20 pounds of organic carrots per day, ate a significant amount of leafy greens and drank copious amounts of homemade broth. Preparing this consumed her day. When I saw her she was developing early signs of Vitamin A toxicity. Cancer patients experience enough emotional, financial and physical stress during treatment. They should be able to trust the individuals providing nutrition counseling to not cause additional harm.

Thank you for hearing my support of SB2187. Please consider a DO PASS for this bill.

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