



**House Human Services Committee**

**HB 1505**

**February 7, 2023**

Chairman Weisz and Committee Members, my name is Joan Connell. I am a pediatrician in Bismarck and I'm president of the North Dakota Medical Association's 6<sup>th</sup> District Medical Society. I present this testimony on behalf of the North Dakota Medical Association. The North Dakota Medical Association is the professional membership organization for North Dakota physicians, residents, and medical students.

NDMA opposes this HB 1505. Although COVID-19 immunizations were probably the source of the bill, it applies to all vaccines, including those against influenza, measles, polio, influenza, pertussis, and hepatitis B.

This bill would prohibit hospitals and clinics from mandating any vaccines. In the healthcare setting, mandating vaccines for healthcare workers as a condition of employment is a common policy that was initially prompted by the goals of protecting patients from healthcare-acquired influenza and to protecting the workplace from the disruption and expense of worker illnesses. This is against the free-market principle of allowing business owners to do what's best for their business, workforce, and patients. Healthcare facilities know the best course of action for their facility, and it should be their choice to determine what policies they enact.

This bill also conflicts with the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) vaccine requirements, which include other vaccines such as hepatitis B and influenza in addition to COVID. Therefore, this bill will significantly burden healthcare facilities in ensuring they properly adhere to immunization policies set by federal standards and state law.

NDMA requests a DO NOT PASS recommendation on the bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.