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Testimony in Support of SB 2114
House Human Services Committee

March 13, 2023

Dear Chairman Weisz, Vice Chairman Ruby, and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the North Dakota Nurses Association (NDNA), please consider this as testimony in support of SB 2114, an Alternative to Discipline Program (ATD).

The North Dakota Nurses Association (NDNA) is the only professional organization representing all nurses in North Dakota. The mission of NDNA is to advance the nursing profession by promoting professional development of nurses, fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the safety and well-being of nurses in the workplace, and advocating on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are aware that the North Dakota Board of Nursing (NDBON) observed a surge in potential violation reports, nurse self-reports of DUIs/other substance issues, and disciplinary determinations for nurses related to substance use and mental health concerns. This surge intensified the already critical nursing workforce shortage as nurses with substance use and mental health concerns were removed from practice in a disciplinary manner.

As mentioned previously, approximately 44 U.S. states and territories have the Alternative to Discipline Programs to manage substance use and mental health issues for the nursing profession in a non-disciplinary manner to support a safe workforce. The ATD programs provide supervision and close monitoring, and nurses receive needed treatment. Their licenses remain unencumbered, and they are still able to work. As NDNA advocates for nurses and a safe and strong nursing workforce, we urge you to consider a "do pass" on this bill.

Thank you,

Sherri Miller, BS, BSN, RN
Executive Director
North Dakota Nurses Association