

Testimony
Senate Bill No. 2205
House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee
Representative Scott Louser, Chairman
March 28, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Louser, and members of the Committee. My name is Dan Cramer. I am a psychologist and Clinical Director of the behavioral health clinics (regional human service centers) with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I am submitting testimony in support of Senate Bill 2205, Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact, and ask that you give the bill a Do Pass recommendation.

The human service centers have reduced from having 28 licensed psychologists employed in 2015 to just 14 at the current time. All current vacant psychologist positions have been vacant for more than 6 months. This challenge of hiring licensed psychologists is not unique to the human service centers and is a significant problem across North Dakota. I have been informed that when referring an individual for a psychological evaluation in the community, wait times are typically 6 to 9 months. This is not acceptable, and we need to be creative in making it easier to hire psychologists from across state lines or through telehealth means.

The Interjurisdictional Compact, as outlined in Senate Bill 2205, helps to address some of the barriers that currently exist in hiring out of state psychologists. It will help support improved access to psychological care to North Dakota citizens. Psychological practice is well adapted to provide through telehealth means and I believe every practical barrier that can be

addressed to help make this service more accessible to community members should be implemented.

I understand that an amendment will be proposed to allow the Board of Psychologist Examiners to adopt rules and standards establishing a predoctoral supervised psychological internship program. This is further opportunity to support and grow the practice of psychology in our state. There is currently a psychology internship program at Southeast Human Service Center. Since its inception in 2001, the program has had 59 interns. Ten of those interns have stayed on to work for the State of North Dakota and 5 continue to do so. By expanding the growth and development of internship programs in our state, we create additional opportunities to secure a steady behavioral health workforce for our state's future.

Please consider giving the bill a Do Pass recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Regional Human Service Centers Clinical Director