



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF NORTH DAKOTA

House Judiciary

Testimony In Support of Senate Bill 2067

March 13, 2023

Chairman Klemin, members of the Committee, my name is Greg Kasowski, and I'm the executive director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota. I appear today in support of Senate Bill 2067.

Paula Condol has informed you about the issue regarding the once-a-biennium reimbursements for forensic interviews, and how this bill would allow us to request reimbursements throughout the biennium instead. She also mentioned about the difficulties in waiting so long for reimbursements. I should mention that some Children's Advocacy Centers need to borrow against a line of credit because they have to wait so long for reimbursements. In some instances they'll have to wait 20+ months, which increases their interest costs.

I also wanted to bring attention to one other proposed change to the statute, and that is the removal of the insurance requirement in the reimbursement process.

To provide a background on the situation, a reimbursement for each child's forensic interview goes through three other agencies first before it comes to the Attorney General's office. Our Children's Advocacy Centers first seek reimbursement through private health insurance, second through Medicaid, third through the Crime Victims' Compensation program, and, if none of those programs reimburse, then through the Attorney General's office.

Although Medicaid covers about 50% and the Crime Victims Fund covers about 8% of the 1,700 forensic interviews conducted each biennium, zero forensic interviews are being reimbursed in that first step—private health insurance. This is because health insurers do not pay for evidence collection for a crime. They do not even have a billing code for evidence collection and always deny claims. We are running thousands of claims through health insurance, unnecessarily wasting at least 170 hours each biennium of administrative time. This bill would alleviate that administrative burden on our Children's Advocacy Centers.

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee, I ask for your support of Senate Bill 2067. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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