

SB 2012

Senate Appropriations, HR Section

January 25, 2023

Senator Dever, Chairman

Good morning Chairman Dever and members of the HR Section of Senate Appropriations. I'm Angela Dinius, the new executive director of the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP). NDACP is a statewide association of 31 members who provide a wide range of services for people with developmental disabilities.

We are here today to ask for your support on an:

- Inflationary increase of 5% and 5% -or- 6% and 4%;
- Increase to the rate matrix of \$1.88 for each service; which is an approximate 10-11% increase; and
- Adding 30 slots for corporate guardianship, increasing the daily rate to \$10.30, and including the same inflationary increase.

Our top priority is the health and safety of the people we support. We are striving to meet workforce challenges by finding efficiencies and creative solutions. On average, we are paying a higher hourly rate to employees than the payment system reimbursement. For example, the average pay rate for employees providing residential services is \$17.91. However, the average reimbursement rate for that service is only \$16.66 per hour. Also, since the pandemic, turnover has significantly climbed with the average turnover rate for direct support professionals (DSPs) at 47%.

Our employees provide support and services to our state's most vulnerable population, yet the proposed inflationary increase is not enough to keep us competitive with fast food restaurants or big box retail stores. We are fully funded with Medicaid dollars, so unlike other industries, we cannot simply raise prices, alter hours, or adjust services. Additionally, our staff works nontraditional hours; shifts span 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I would like to introduce the providers who are here to testify today and who can give you a more complete picture of the impact this will make to not only our staff, but to the thousands of people we support every day.

- Lorena Poppe, Poppy's Promise
- Mike Remboldt, HIT, Inc.
- Julie Erickson, Grand Forks Growth & Support Center
- Sargianna Wutzke, Community Options
- Donna Byzewski, Catholic Charities ND

We appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and urge you to support our funding requests so we can continue to provide quality support and services to the people who depend on us. Thank you and I'll stand for any questions.

Angela Dinius
Executive Director
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