

**Testimony**  
**Engrossed House Bill No. 1043**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Judy Lee, Chairman**  
February 20, 2023

Chairman Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Kelli Ulberg, Manager of Children's Behavioral Health Program and Policy with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department), Behavioral Health Division. I appear before you in support of Engrossed House Bill No. 1043, which was introduced at the request of the Department.

The Behavioral Health Division is responsible for the regulation of Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities for children (PRTFs) as prescribed by North Dakota Century Code Chapter 25-03. PRTFs are residential based services that serve children with the most difficult behavioral health needs and who cannot be effectively treated in a less restrictive setting. This bill applies to the six PRTFs licensed in our state.

**Section 1**

The proposed changes in Section 1 of this Bill amends section 25-03.2-01 of the North Dakota Century Code. The proposed changes on page 2, lines 8 through 14 of this Bill adds a definition of serious risk of harm to align to current best practice.

**Section 2**

The proposed changes in Section 2 of this Bill amends section 25-03.2-03 of the North Dakota Century Code. The changes on page 2, lines 22 and 23 amends the program director requirements from a master's degree to a bachelor's degree and removes the required two years of professional experience requirement. The duties of a program director often include human resources, budgeting, scheduling, operations, policies and procedures, and strategic planning.

**Section 3**

The proposed changes in Section 3 of this Bill amends section 25-03.2-06 of the North Dakota Century Code. The changes on page 3, lines 19 through 27 amends the admission criteria to provide clarity and be in alignment with current best practice and operation.

The House Human Services committee amended the language on page 2 line 23 to remove the two years of professional experience requirement. To add further clarification, I would like to propose on page 2, line 24 to remove "in the treatment of" and replace with "working with." This proposed change would clarify that the professional experience is not required to be clinical or treatment level experience and would be in alignment with the House Human Services' committee discussion and amendment.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.