



The North Dakota Rural Health Association's mission is to bring together diverse interests and provide a unified voice to promote and enhance the quality of rural health through leadership, advocacy, coalition building, education and communication.

Visit the NDRHA website at ndrha.org!

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Senate Human Services Committee

SB 2160

February 14, 2023

Chair Lee and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to weigh in on this important issue to healthcare in North Dakota. My name is Kylie Nissen and I am the executive director of the North Dakota Rural Health Association.

The North Dakota Rural Health Association's (NDRHA) mission is to bring together diverse interests and provide a unified voice to promote and enhance the quality of rural health through leadership, advocacy, coalition building, education and communication. Our vision is to be an effective advocate for improving health for rural North Dakotans and to promote public awareness and understanding of North Dakota's rural healthcare problems.

NDRHA supports measures that help the state's rural providers utilize the telehealth services that have been shown throughout the pandemic to facilitate stable and consistent medical care without a patient ever stepping foot into a clinic or facility. For rural communities throughout North Dakota, the full use of telehealth can de-escalate crises, refill needed medications and provide guidance to other practitioners to make better diagnostic decisions and referrals. Increased telehealth utilization will also help alleviate the already limited healthcare workforce and ensure patients have timely access to quality behavioral health services.

For these reasons, NDRHA asks this committee to take up the Schulte Report's recommendations to address any regulatory hurdles preventing the full usage of tele-behavioral health services in rural North Dakota. Making sure that tele-behavioral health services are reimbursed at the same levels as in-person behavioral services is critical to ramp up tele-behavioral health services. We, therefore, urge a DO PASS recommendation for SB 2160.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kylie Nissen, Executive Director
North Dakota Rural Health Association