



# North Dakota Senate

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**COMMITTEES:**  
Industry and Business  
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SENATE BILL 2332  
SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE - FORT LINCOLN ROOM  
SENATOR JUDY LEE, CHAIR

Chairwoman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, for the record, my name is Jeff Barta. I am the Senator from District 43 in Grand Forks.

Approximately 2 weeks ago I was approached by a constituent from my District asking if I would be willing to help some people introduce a bill about their idea to deliver much needed healthcare services to rural North Dakota. Being a naïve, ambitious freshman Senator, I told him I would be more than happy to listen to what they had to say, but made no promises. He proceeded to provide me the contact number for Tracee Capron, and what I thought would be a 5-minute conversation, turned into a two- and half-hour meeting in the Capitol Café with Tracee and Stephen Astrup, both of whom are here with us today.

During this meeting these two shared with me the status of hospice care in our state and how there was a gap in coverage. Tracee shared their desired mission of delivering home based primary, palliative, and hospice services to all North Dakotans. She told me how they believe that even though there are many obstacles, there is a way to provide these services to the entire state, and that by doing so, we can improve the quality of life for our aging population

by helping them stay in their homes longer; a comment we hear quite often as the desired goal of our parents or grandparents.

I will admit that the bill as presented, needs a little work. Over the last few days, multiple conversations have been had with people across the spectrum of healthcare regarding the intent of this bill. These conversations have led to some suggested changes in the language and I have created a rough draft of the areas we suggest amending that I believe will be more palatable to the committee and the state. Those changes are provided as Exhibit A attached to this testimony and I am happy to review those with you. Nonetheless, I believe the subject matter of this bill needs to be discussed sooner than later and that is why I am in front of you today. This is just the first step in creating a comprehensive, collaborative care program of delivering primary, palliative and hospice care to the residents of ND.

SB2332 is an investment in the future of our rural healthcare delivery. It will allow for the delivery of home based services to augment the care being provided by rural hospitals and clinics throughout the state; working in coordination with services such as local therapy groups, pharmacy services, mental health and counseling services, and when necessary, hospitalizations or even referrals to specialty services.

Behind me are a group of dedicated providers who will provide more details on the needs for, and the merits of, a comprehensive end of life program for rural North Dakotans. Their driving desire to help this population will be evident in the testimony you will hear & read today.

Madame Chair and members of the Health & Human Services committee, I thank you for listening and will stand for any questions you may have. I do believe, however, that the people that will be following me, will be much more informative than I.

EXHIBIT A

Page 1, Line 6, remove "\$82,000,000" and insert "\$22,000,000"

Page 1, Line 10, remove "an"

Page 1, Line 11, remove "program" and insert "programs"

Page 1, Line 11, remove "is" and insert "are"

Page 1, Line 16 & 17, "remove "and to construct, staff, and operate two 12-bed inpatient units"