



2023 SENATE BILL 2345
Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman
January 30, 2023

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Tim Blasl, President, of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). I provide this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2345 and ask that you give this bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Hospitals support the funding of grants for indigent guardianship services and efforts to increase the reimbursement rate and number of corporate guardians. When a hospitalized patient is unable to make health care decisions for himself and does not have anyone qualified to make decisions for him, the patient can unfortunately be stuck in a hospital bed long after discharge should have happened. In a perfect world, the process of securing a guardian for a vulnerable individual would take a few days to a week. Currently, however, the process takes an average of 30-90 days. In some cases, it is much longer.

These situations present many challenges for the patient and the hospital. When the patient is ready for discharge, but is waiting for guardianship services, the bed is not available for another patient who needs it. While the patient remains in limbo, there is no one to instruct the hospital in care decisions. Hospitals cannot employ or choose guardians directly because the guardian could be viewed as lacking the necessary independence to make decisions, as required by law. They must rely on the patient's family and friends or, if none are willing or able to serve, a corporate guardian, to initiate the process and serve.

By better funding indigent and corporate guardianship services, SB 2345 addresses these barriers and takes the right step toward more efficiently connecting vulnerable patients to the services they need.

Please give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tim Blasl, President
North Dakota Hospital Association