



Good morning Chair and Committee Members,

I am Krystil Smit, executive director of South Dakota Farm Bureau. I am joining you today to share our experience with passing legislation two years ago which has allowed South Dakota Farm Bureau to offer health care plans to our members.

The South Dakota legislature passed our health care bill in February of 2021 and we started offering health plans 7 months later on October 1. After just over a year of operating, I am pleased to share that we have over 700 covered lives in the South Dakota Farm Bureau Health plans and our members have reported saving from \$500 up to \$1600 per month on their health coverage. Those savings are life changing for the families in our health care plans.

Because of our health care program, one young mom was able to give up her job in town and the employer health insurance for which was the reason she was working, to stay home with their three young sons and help out on the family ranch. Not only did she experience a health event which landed her in the hospital for a few days, they are also soon welcoming a fourth child. They could not be more pleased with the reliable coverage they have experienced with SDFB Health Plans.

Testimonials like this are what we were hoping for that would make a difference for our members who had been reaching out to Farm Bureau for many years asking for help with high health care costs for independent business operators like our farmers and ranchers. Partnering with Farm Bureau Health Plans of Tennessee, which has been offering health care plans for 70 years, has provided an option to current and new Farm Bureau members looking for affordable, quality health care coverage. Having a financially stable partner who provides the financial assurance to cover claims is critical for the success of the South Dakota Farm Bureau Health Plans.

The Farm Bureau Health Plans are patterned after the ACA plans on the marketplace today and offer a robust nationwide network of providers through the United Health Care Network. The out-of-pocket maximums and co-pays are comparable to what most are used to on ACA plans as well. But Farm Bureau Health Plans are not individually rated which means families pay one rate whether they have one or multiple children and there are several coverage options available.

Once a member is offered a plan of coverage and they continue their SDFB membership and pay their premiums, they will never be denied coverage or be cancelled. While pre-existing conditions are considered, South Dakota Farm Bureau Health Plans have accepted about 90 percent of applicants into the program.

And you do not have to be a farmer or rancher to be a Farm Bureau member; anyone can join and apply for health care coverage. Our program has offered solutions not only to rural families, but we have teachers, small business owners and community members in our plan. What's more is our state's Governor recently announced during her State of the State address that she plans to partner with South Dakota Farm Bureau Health Plans to offer solutions and options to our state's daycare providers.

Just like South Dakota Farm Bureau, North Dakota Farm Bureau is uniquely positioned to offer health care coverage options to North Dakotans, filling a gap of uninsured or underinsured individuals and families. They are a trusted organization with over a century long track record of serving farm, ranch, rural and community families.

I encourage you to support SB 2349 and North Dakota Farm Bureau's effort to join other Farm Bureaus including Tennessee, South Dakota, Kansas, Indiana, Texas, Michigan and others in offering a solution to burdensome costs and provide options for quality, affordable and benefits-rich health care coverage to North Dakotans.

I welcome any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.