

**Support SB 2202  
North Dakota Senate Judiciary Committee**

January 18, 2023

Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Tisha Scheuer, I am the Executive Director of Central Dakota Forensic Nurse Examiners (CDFNE).

I am testifying today in support of SB 2202.

Multidisciplinary response teams are considered best evidence-based practice in responding to victims of sexual violence. Forensic medical examinations are a key part of any multidisciplinary response to victims. Studies have shown that exams performed by SANEs; results in better health outcomes and in turn leads to higher prosecution rates in their regions. However, in North Dakota our well-established multidisciplinary teams only respond to one type of victim and that is sexual assault. Over the years we have become experts in providing forensic medical services to our sexual assault victims and so we believe it is time to expand our services to all victims of violence, in particular domestic violence, and physical abuse in children.

The victims of domestic violence and physical abuse in North Dakota have not been given the opportunity to receive this high level of expertise simply due to lack of funding. I have been deeply involved in state SANE services for 20 years and during that time the funding for forensic medical services has been focused primarily on the sexual assault victim. While that is crucial, we cannot continue to ignore the other victim population that is even bigger in numbers.

The goal for this pilot project is to utilize the already established expertise and experience the trained SANE nurse in the state have, while maintaining patient-centered, trauma-informed, and

evidence based forensic services for victims of both domestic violence and child victims of physical abuse. While this pilot study will not take the place of emergency services provided through the emergency rooms, what we can provide is: expert forensic photography of all injuries, identification of non-fatal strangulation injuries and referrals as needed, evidence collection for example: bite marks on intimate areas, as well as wrap around services, and expert testimony in court, just to name a few.

Therefore, today I am asking you to give a DO PASS recommendation to SB 2202.

Thank you,

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