

**Testimony Relating to the National Council for State Authorization  
Reciprocity Agreements Membership  
House Education Committee  
January 13, 2025  
House Bill 1064**

My name is Nikki Wegner, and I am the President at the North Dakota Long Term Care Association. Thank you for the opportunity to write to you today in opposition to HB 1064.

Long term care facilities across North Dakota are facing unprecedented workforce challenges. These challenges span all levels of the healthcare workforce, from entry-level positions to advanced-degree professionals, especially in nursing. To meet these challenges, we support any and all pathways to healthcare education that can help us build and sustain the skilled workforce we so desperately need.

While we do not claim to fully understand the background or details of higher education approval regulations for online programs, we have concerns about the potential consequences of this bill. Specifically, we worry about the unintended impact it could have on access to healthcare education for North Dakota, particularly for those who rely on the flexibility of online education to pursue or advance their careers.

In reviewing HB 1064, we fear it may inadvertently limit the ability of accredited healthcare education institutions to offer programs that meet the needs of our workforce. This is troubling because any reduction in educational opportunities could exacerbate an already critical workforce shortage.

The stakes are simply too high, and the needs of our industry and our state are too great. We urge this committee to carefully examine HB 1064 to ensure it does not decrease our state's capacity to educate and train the healthcare professionals we so desperately need.

We support innovation, flexibility, and accessibility in healthcare education, and we believe that online education programs, especially those from accredited institutions, play a vital role in building a robust healthcare workforce.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the committee to reconsider or amend HB 1064 to avoid any negative impact on North Dakota's healthcare education system.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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