



CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF NORTH DAKOTA

House Human Services Committee
Testimony In Support of Senate Bill #2292
3-12-25

Chairman Ruby, members of the House Human Services Committee, my name is Greg Kasowski, executive director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota. I appear today in support of Senate Bill 2292.

Benefits of SB 2292

1. **Creates stability** of funding reimbursements for the cost of evidence collection for child forensic interviews.
2. **Aligns more appropriately** with the designation of the funds, in that evidence collection is more related to General funds rather than Insurance Regulatory Trust funds.

Our Expressed Gratitude

We would like to publicly declare our gratitude and appreciation for legislators' continued commitment and support for us to provide this critical service to children impacted by abuse. This investment continues to make a profound difference in the lives of children and families who have experienced some of the most horrific things ever done in our state.

I will stand for any questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Kasowski
Executive Director

Children's Advocacy Centers of North Dakota

www.CACND.org
director@cacnd.org
701.587-1229





**CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY
CENTERS**
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What Is a Children's Advocacy Center?

Children's Advocacy Centers provide critical services to families affected by child sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and other forms of child maltreatment. Our core services include forensic interviews, mental health therapy, victim advocacy, and case coordination with our multidisciplinary team partners in law enforcement, human services, prosecution, mental health, and medical. For medical exams, we partner with several hospital-based and community-based medical agencies across the state to offer this critical service to children and families.

What Is a Forensic Interview?

A forensic interview is a specialized evidence-gathering conversation between a child and a trained forensic interviewer. The forensic interviewer asks unbiased questions that are age, developmentally and culturally appropriate. The forensic interviewer facilitates this information gathering while multidisciplinary team members (i.e., law enforcement, human services, prosecution, etc.) participate by watching the interview in a separate room through closed circuit television. The forensic interview allows multidisciplinary team members to determine if a crime of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, or another form of child maltreatment was committed.

Background to Subsection 3 of 12.1-34-07

The attorney general, subject to legislative appropriations, shall reimburse each accredited children's advocacy center located in the state for a forensic interview that is not reimbursable by Medicaid or crime victims compensation.

Currently, our Children's Advocacy Centers go through a three-step process to request reimbursements for forensic interviews. First, if the child is eligible for Medicaid, then reimbursement is sought through Medicaid. Second, if the child is eligible for reimbursement through the Crime Victims Compensation (CVC) fund, then reimbursement is sought through the Department of Criminal Rehabilitation. If neither Medicaid nor CVC reimburses, then the Attorney General's Office reimburses.

In 2023, Senate Bill 2067 made a change that allowed child forensic interviews to be reimbursed throughout the biennium, rather than only at the end of the biennium. Previously, child forensic interviews were only reimbursed if budgeted funds remained after medical screening and acute forensic medical examinations were reimbursed.

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