



**Testimony in Support – HB 1267  
House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee**

Chairman Warrey and members of the House IBL Committee. My name is Kim Hacker, and I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Optometric Association.

We support HB 1267, as this bill enhances care in underserved areas of North Dakota by expanding telemedicine in a responsible manner.

Currently, the national average of optometrists is 15.1 per 100,000 residents. In contrast, North Dakota has 22.75 optometrists per 100,000 residents. Yet, despite this abundance, these professionals are not uniformly available across our cities and counties, leaving gaps in crucial optometric care.

By passing this bill and expanding optometric telemedicine, North Dakota's licensed optometrists will be able to serve these rural communities effectively.

Additionally, this legislation safeguards the promise of quality, ensuring that all telemedicine services in North Dakota meet the highest standards of care.

I urge the committee to give this bill a DO Pass Recommendation. Thank you.