

**To:** Chair Klemin and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

**From:** Senator Sean Cleary, District 35 — Bismarck, Bill Sponsor

**Date:** February 28, 2025

**Subject:** Testimony in Support of SB 2209: Enhancing Forensic Medical Services

Dear Chair Larson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 2209, which improves forensic medical services for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and neglect. This bill increases access to trauma-informed care, strengthens evidence collection, and supports law enforcement investigations, ensuring accountability for offenders and justice for victims.

**Key Provisions of SB 2209:**

- **Extending Timeframes for Forensic Medical Exams:**  
Expands the window for exams from 96 to 120 hours for sexual assault victims. This aligns with national best practices and ensures timely care and evidence collection.
- **Making the Pilot Program Permanent:**  
Codifies the 2023 program that expanded services to include domestic violence, physical abuse, and neglect victims. In 2024, this program served 62 victims in 10 counties, demonstrating its success and capacity for statewide expansion.
- This bill includes an appropriation of \$200,000. This reflects the costs that are incurred when the exams are performed and ensures victims are not paying out of pocket for these services.

**Impact:**

SB 2209 strengthens victim care, enhances evidence integrity, and improves collaboration with law enforcement, improving public safety and ensuring victims of sexual assault and domestic violence have access to the services they need.

I respectfully request a “Do-Pass” recommendation. Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

**Sean Cleary**

State Senator, District 35 — Bismarck

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