



Senate Industry and Business Committee

HB 1283

March 18, 2025

Chairman Barta and Committee Members, I'm Courtney Koebele and I serve as executive director of the North Dakota Medical Association. The North Dakota Medical Association is the professional membership organization for North Dakota physicians, residents, and medical students.

NDMA supports HB 1283. NDMA is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, to give them a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them provide the best care possible. NDMA strongly supports requiring coverage as defined in the bill, with zero cost-sharing as part of a patient's annual preventive breast cancer screening. As we know, regular and comprehensive mammograms contribute to the early detection of breast cancer, improving treatment outcomes and survival rates, reducing healthcare costs associated with advanced-stage cancer treatments, and ultimately saving lives. By requiring coverage for diagnostic imaging, North Dakota will provide clarity and assurance to patients who may forego screenings due to high out-of-pocket costs.

Many studies have been published related to disparities and delays in breast cancer care. Delays in care were found to be higher for women with Medicaid or no insurance,

and women living in economically disadvantaged zip codes. The delays in care are partially related to insurance coverage and the cost of follow-up testing. Delays lead to decreased survival. Patients with breast cancer treatment delays of 3 months or more have 12% lower 5-year survival than those with shorter delays and longer delays are associated with more advanced stages. Low-income breast cancer patients have 5-year relative survival rates that are 9% lower than higher income patients. When breast cancer is small and does not involve regional lymph nodes, it is easier and less expensive to treat, with fewer complications and better long-term survival. Helping women to have access to diagnostic testing will improve patient experience and outcomes and decrease overall health care costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. I would be happy to answer any questions.