



**BOARD OF
MEDICINE**

Established 1890

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SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 20, 2025

TESTIMONY OF
NORTH DAKOTA BOARD OF MEDICINE
HOUSE BILL NO. 1039

Chair Wobbema, members of the Committee, I'm Sandra DePountis, Executive Director of the North Dakota Board of Medicine, appearing on behalf of the Board to present House Bill 1039 relating to the North Dakota Professional Health Program (PHP).

For those not familiar with the PHP, the PHP facilitates the rehabilitation of healthcare providers who have physical or mental health conditions that could compromise public safety, and to monitor their recovery. It's a safe place for our licensees to go to get the help they need – whether it be from burnout or a substance use disorder. The PHP evaluates the needs of every individual and utilizes its resources to match them with appropriate treatment to create an individualized monitoring program.

Currently, this program is offered to licensees under the jurisdiction of the Board of Medicine, and those applying for a license. Last session, Senate Bill 2098 passed and extended the program to students enrolled in medical school or physician assistant school.

This current bill looks to again extend the program – this time to “former” licensees. This would cover individuals who were a part of the program and, for whatever reason, are no longer licensed. For example, a licensee who has a substance use disorder and is not safe to practice, and therefore their license is suspended. By allowing such individuals to continue or be eligible for enrollment with the PHP, they have a better chance of getting their license back after rehabilitation and treatment. The PHP is there for them every step of the way, providing support

Mission Statement

The Board's mission is to protect the public's health, safety and welfare by regulating the practice of medicine, thereby ensuring quality health care for the citizens of this state.

and monitoring, working with them to get them back to a place where they are safe to practice and back into the workforce. The language of this bill would allow for Board funds to be used to cover the continued participation of its licensees who need its accountability and monitoring.

Thank you for your time and attention and I would be happy to answer any questions.