

The Council

Health Care Committee

The Health Care Committee held its third meeting on February 12. As part of the committee's study on historical health care mandates, the committee received testimony from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota, Sanford Health Plan, the Public Employees Retirement System, the Insurance Department, Essentia Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Susan G. Komen organization. The testimony highlighted health care mandates history, opportunities for improvement, and overviews of the insurance mandate process.

The committee also received information regarding dental outreach, engagement, and Medicaid improvement from the Department of Health and Human Services for the study on unmet dental and oral health care needs of low-income children, Native American children, and individuals with disabilities. The committee received information for its electronic prior authorization requirement study from Blue Cross Blue Shield and the North Dakota Hospital Association. This testimony addressed provider electronic submission usage amounts and challenges for providers to submit prior authorizations electronically.

Upcoming Meetings

February

- 23** Child Custody Review Task Force
- 25** Emergency Response Services
- 26** Energy Development and Transmission

March

- 4** Special Education Funding
- 12** Administrative Rules
- 18** Budget Section (including divisions)
- 24** Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review
- 25** Legislative Task Force on Government Efficiency
- 26** Water Topics Overview
- 31** Agriculture and Water Management



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Mitch Fisher

Mitch Fisher joined the Legislative Council as a Legislative Administrative Specialist. He was born and raised in the Bismarck/Mandan area and recently graduated from Bismarck State College with an associate's degree in liberal arts. While attending BSC, he won a national championship in his Rocket League esports team. He plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in public administration online through the University of North Dakota beginning in the Fall of 2026. In his free time, he enjoys playing video games.



Benjamin Hieserich

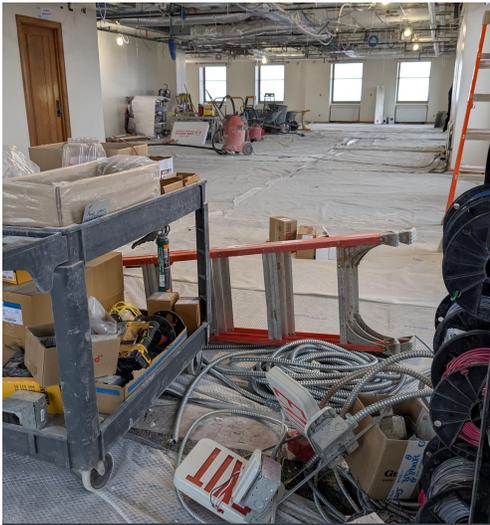
Ben Hieserich joined the Legislative Council as a Legislative Administrative Specialist. He grew up in Breckenridge, Minnesota, and has a bachelor's degree in political science from St. John's University with a concentration in international politics. After college he spent 4 years teaching in Japan, and returned to Fargo where he worked in document services for law firms for approximately 14 years. He enjoys traveling, watching sports, gaming, learning languages, and history



Jason Kovacevich

Jason Kovacevich joined the Legislative Council as a Senior Program Evaluator in the Policy and Program Evaluation Division. He grew up in South Central Alaska but has called North Dakota his home for over 15 years.

Jason brings previous experience in government, having worked for over 5 years as an auditor in the performance auditing division of the State Auditor's Office. Before that, he worked in the oil field services industry in western North Dakota. In his free time he enjoys spending time with family, traveling, watching and playing hockey, and other sports as well as learning about all varieties of topics.



Construction Update

Ongoing projects have moved many of our administrative and legal staff to committee rooms temporarily.

In other site activity, 15th floor renovations continue. The 15th floor will be staff offices for the Administrative Services and Operations and Policy and Program Evaluation Divisions.



Human Services Committee

The Human Services Committee held its third meeting on February 11. The committee continued to receive testimony regarding homelessness in North Dakota. The committee received updates from the Housing Finance Agency on the meetings of the Interagency Council on Homelessness; Presentation Partners in Housing on its programs for housing and prevention of homelessness; Community Action Partnership of North Dakota regarding the use of Community Services Block Grant funding and its impact on homelessness; Youthworks related to homelessness with youth, including foster transition; Continuum of Care regarding data on homelessness in the state; and Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health relating to the community triage center project. The committee received testimony from the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities on the Dual Sensory Project and early hearing detection and intervention. Representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services provided an update on the progress of the Child Care Services Advisory Committee regarding child care licensing. In addition, the Legislative Council provided an update on the progress of the child care program evaluation and the development of the policy division.

The committee also received reports from the Department of Health and Human Services regarding adult residential facility and basic care payment systems and the Pay for Success Program. The committee likely will meet again in May.



CONTACT ndlegis.gov

600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

701-328-2916
lcouncil@ndlegis.gov

