

**2021 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES**

**SB 2125**

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Human Services Committee**  
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

SB 2125  
1/12/2021

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 1 of section 43-12.3-06 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the health care professional student loan repayment program.

**Madam Chair Lee** opens the hearing on SB 2125 at 9:32 a.m. All members present: Senator Lee, Senator K. Roers, Senator Clemens, Senator Hogan, Senator Anderson, Senator O. Larsen.

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Mental Health budget
- Licensed behavioral analysts
- School psychology loan repayment
- Clinical workforce shortage

**[9:33] Senator K. Roers, District 27, State Health Council.** Introduced SB 2125.

**[9:33] Holly Johnson, Behavior Analyst, North Dakota Association for Behavior Analysis (NDABA), North Dakota Governor's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force.** Provided testimony #409, #411 and #596 in favor.

**[9:39] Bobbie Will, Primary Care Office Director, North Dakota Department of Health.** Provided testimony #562 in favor.

**[9:48] Kirsten Dvorak, Executive Director, The Arc of North Dakota.** Provided testimony #576 in favor.

**[9:53] Levi Andres, GA Group.** Introduced Tim Eissinger to the committee.

**[9:54] Tim Eissinger, CEO, Anne Carlsen Center.** Provided testimony #484 in favor.

## **Additional written testimony:**

**Cristine Deaver, Licensed and Board Certified Behavior Analyst.** Provided written testimony #398 in favor.

**Rosalie Etherington, Superintendent, North Dakota State Hospital (NDSH), Department of Human Services.** Provided written testimony #561 in favor.

**Madam Chair Lee** closes the hearing on SB 2125 at 10:01 a.m.

*Justin Velez, Committee Clerk*

**Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 2125 – Relating to the Health Care Professional**  
**Student Loan Repayment Program**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Judy Lee, Chairwoman**  
January 12, 2021

Chairwoman Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

I am Holly Johnson, Licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst, member and Past President of the North Dakota Association for Behavior Analysis (NDABA), and an appointed member of the ND Governor's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force. I live Minot, and provide behavioral health services through the Developmental Disabilities Behavioral Health Services (DD BHS) Field Services division out of the Life Skills & Transition Center. My service delivery area spreads from the Devils Lake region to the Williston Basin region, and as far east as New Rockford. I deliver services in 14 ND counties identified as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the ND Primary Care Office. I am currently the sole traveling Behavior Analyst (BA) in those areas. It is a personal, core value for me to provide services to the underserved regions and rural areas of this great state. I consult with families, schools, and private providers serving people with complex behavioral needs. I have worked collaboratively with individuals, their caregivers, and their teams of professionals in behavioral assessment, skills training, and integrated staff interventions for clients with acute and chronic mental illness (e.g., mood, anxiety, personality, and psychotic disorders) as well as acute and chronic medical illness (e.g., severe seizure disorders, rare chromosomal abnormalities, feeding disorders and post-surgical rehabilitation), which occur comorbidly with developmental and/or intellectual disability.

The Health Council administers, develops, and establishes criteria for this student loan program. During a special meeting held December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Health Council members voted to move forward with legislation to add BAs to NDCC Chapter 43-12.3-06 e. In the attachments I provided, you will see how BAs compare to the other behavioral health professions that qualify for this student loan program, including the number of ND licensed professionals in each discipline. You can also see the concentration of BAs geographically across ND. In ND, 91% of counties are fully or partially designated as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas. The demand for BAs in ND greatly exceeds the supply, especially in addition to the geographical location of professionals by comparison to those identified mental health professional shortage areas.

I applied for this student loan repayment program in March of 2018 and was automatically denied because my profession was not included in the language of recognized behavioral health professions. I also supervise BA graduate students. Four out of twelve of those students (or 1 in 3), who were ND residents during their study, have left to pursue better job opportunities (e.g., more pay, better incentives, higher insurance reimbursement rates, and loan repayment programs) in other states (specifically Washington, Michigan, Connecticut, and California). We will not be able to recruit and retain adequate workforce, especially to serve the rural mental health professional shortage areas of ND, without incentives such as this student loan program available to my profession.

In summary, please consider approving the added language to SB 2125 for BAs to be a recognized behavioral health profession. It is imperative to include BAs as recognized behavioral health professionals to retain and entice more professionals to this state, and ultimately, to better serve the

remote, rural, and underserved regions who lack BAs as an option for their behavioral health needs.

All opinion expressed here is my own. These opinions in no way represent the Department of Human Services or the Life Skills and Transition Center, all of which I am actively involved with, adding to my unique perspective contained in this testimony. This testimony has been provided on my personal time.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony. If I can be of assistance during this time of deliberation, please contact me at [holly.johnson.bcba@outlook.com](mailto:holly.johnson.bcba@outlook.com). This concludes my testimony.

Sincerely,

Holly Johnson, MS, BCBA, LBA

Board Certified Behavior Analyst #1-14-15198

ND Licensed Behavior Analyst #L15

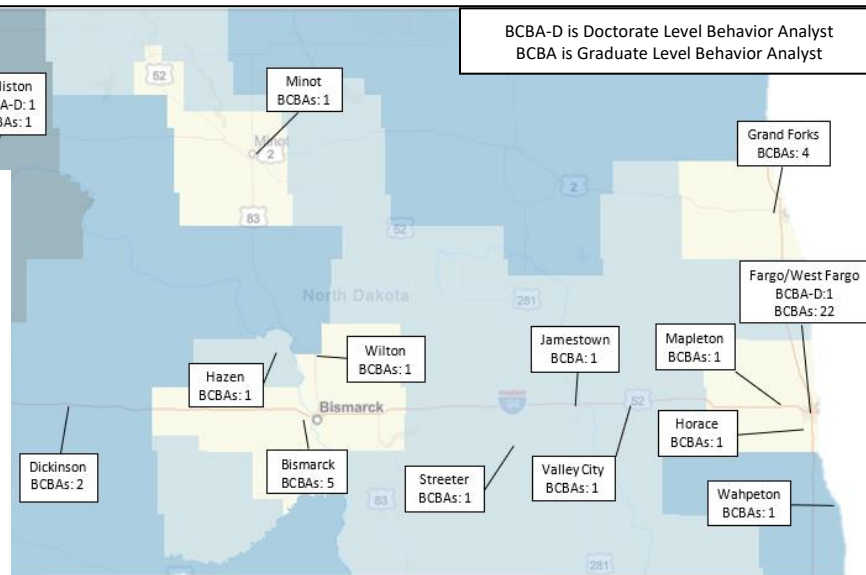
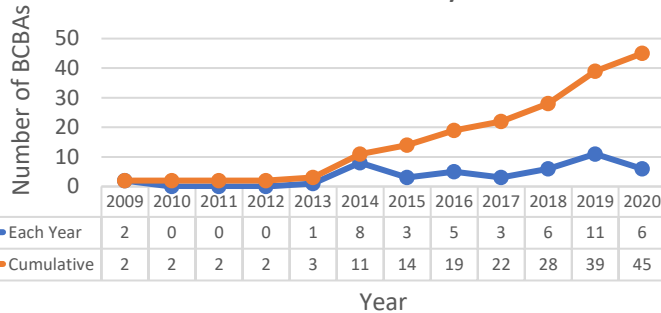
# Addition of Licensed Behavior Analysts as a Behavioral Health Discipline

**Behavior Analysts serve a variety of populations with behavioral health needs.**

## Geographical Locations of Behavior Analysts Compared to HPSAs #411

BCBA-D is Doctorate Level Behavior Analyst  
BCBA is Graduate Level Behavior Analyst

Number of BCBAs in ND by Year



## Comparison to other Behavioral Health Disciplines:

Discipline	Licensed Behavior Analysts	Licensed Addiction Counselors	Licensed Professional Counselors	Licensed Social Workers	Registered Nurses & Specialty Practice Registered Nurses
Numbers	LBAs=45	LACs=322	LPC/LPCC=492	LBSW=1609 LMSW=410 LCSW=445	RNs=16,198 Specialty RNs=4
Licensing Board & Cost	Integrative Healthcare Board (prior to 2020 was Board of Psychology Examiners) Exam=\$370 Application=\$500 (2-years)	Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners  Exam=\$200 Application=\$300 (2-years)	Board of Counselor Examiners  Exam=\$375 Application=\$150	Board of Social Work Examiners  Application=\$100	Board of Nursing  Application=\$125
Education Level	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Baccalaureate, Master, Clinical	Baccalaureate, Graduate, Doctorate
Clinical Training Required	1500-2000 hrs. (100-150 hrs. supervised)	700 hrs. (140 hrs. supervised)	100 hrs practicum + 600 hrs. internship (100 hrs. supervised)	400 hrs of client contact (100 hrs. supervised)	Graduate=3 semesters of practicum
Cost of Tuition at UND  (Total Cost Calculated Using Online Per Credit)	Online=\$559/credit x (32 credit hours + 19 credit hours for ABA) = \$28,509	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus=\$533/credit</li> <li>Online=\$872/credit x 20 credit hours = \$17,440</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus=\$533/credit</li> <li>Online=\$872/credit x 60-71 credit hours = \$61,912</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus=\$434/credit (undergrad) x 120 credit hours = \$52,080</li> <li>Campus=\$541/credit (graduate)</li> <li>Online=\$697/credit x 36-60 credit hours (graduate) = \$41,820</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus=\$489/credit (undergrad)</li> <li>Online=\$502/credit (undergrad) x 121 credit hours = \$60,742</li> <li>Online=\$856/credit (graduate) x 49 credits (PMHNP) = \$17,120</li> </ul>
Average Salary	\$58,524-\$69,864	\$58,524-\$76,908	\$84,780	\$51,630-\$69,864	\$58,524-\$76,980 (RNs) \$99,468-\$169,450 (PMHNP)

## Behavior Analysts Primary Area of Professional Emphasis (National):

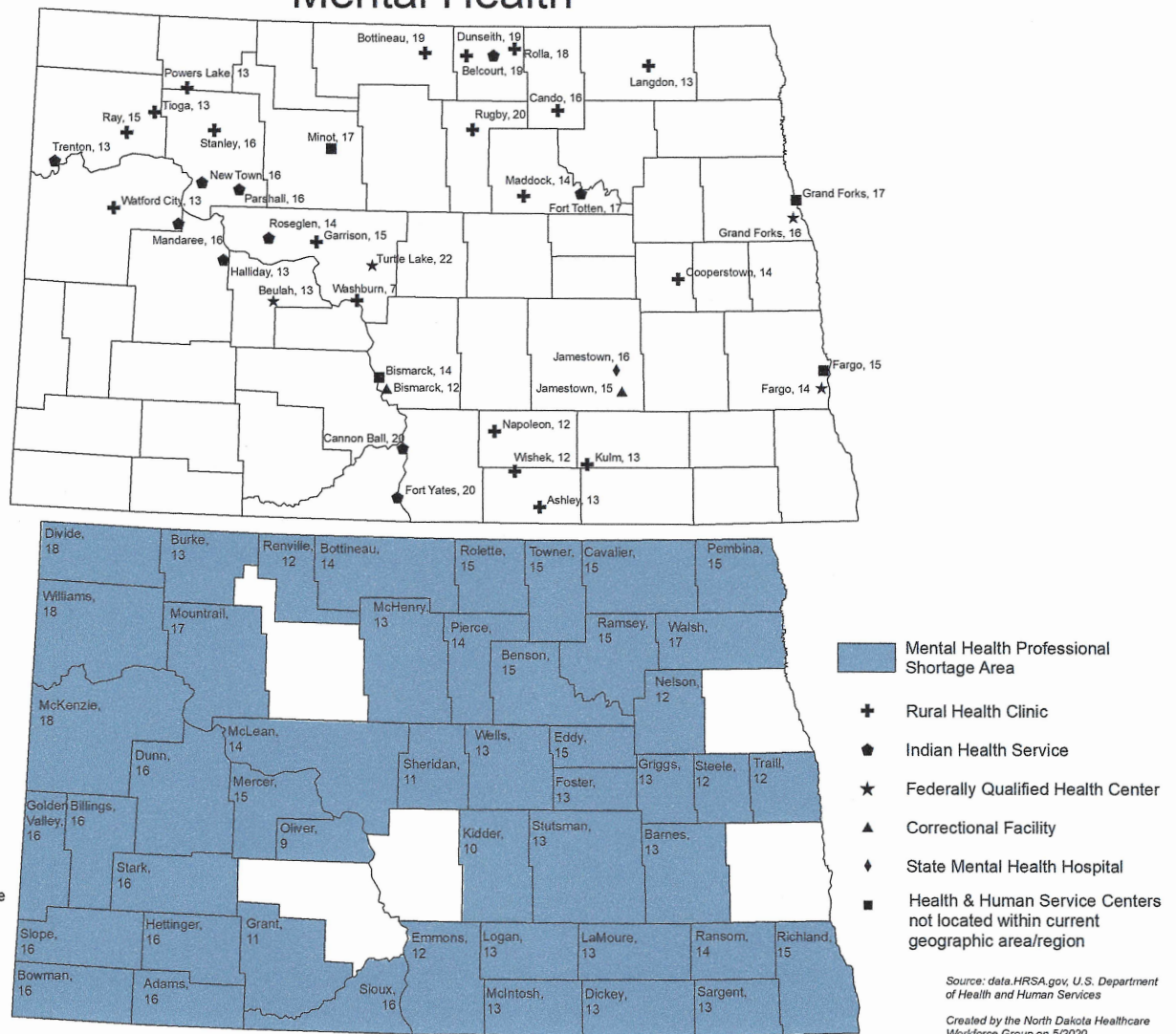
**74.01%: Autism Spectrum Disorders (generally clients receiving 5-40hrs/week)**

**(10.56%: Education) (5.09%: Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities) (3.02%: Clinical) (1.11%: Higher Education)**

**>1%: Health, Sports, & Fitness; Public Policy & Advocacy; Professional Supervision; Parent & Caregiver Training;**

**Organizational Behavior Management; Non-University Research; Dissemination of B.A.; Corrections & Delinquency; Child Welfare; Brain Injury Rehab; Behavioral Gerontology**

## North Dakota Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health



Upper map is city name, facility HPSA score  
Lower map is county name, HPSA score



Center for Rural Health  
University of North Dakota  
School of Medicine & Health Sciences

Source: data HRSA.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Created by the North Dakota Healthcare Workforce Group on 5/2020

Good morning, Chairwoman Lee and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Bobbie Will, and I serve as the Primary Care Office Director for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here to provide information on the health care professional student state loan repayment program, including the proposed amendment in Senate Bill 2125 relating to adding licensed behavioral analysts to the behavioral health professional field section.

In 1994, the North Dakota State Legislature established student loan repayments for certain health care professions to increase the number of providers in areas of the state with defined health professional needs. Since then, loan repayments have been made to physicians, clinical psychologists, advance practice nurses and physician assistants. Behavioral health professionals were added in 2016.

Further information on the State Loan Repayment Programs can be found in the attached fact sheet and on the Primary Care Office website: [www.ndhealth.gov/pco/main.asp](http://www.ndhealth.gov/pco/main.asp) in the Program Resources tab.

The amended language in Senate Bill 2125 will allow the State Health Council to consider awarding a student repayment loan to a licensed behavioral analyst along with the current five disciplines listed in 43-12-3.06 e. The selection criteria, state award, community match and eligibility for participation will not change.

This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



# LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM FACTS

## NORTH DAKOTA HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL Student Loan Repayment Program

### ELIGIBLE DISCIPLINES

- Physicians
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
- Physician Assistants
- Clinical Psychologists  
(licensed by the State Board of Psychologist Examiners)
- Behavioral Health Professionals
  - Licensed Addiction Counselors
  - Licensed Professional Counselors
  - Licensed Social Workers
  - Registered Nurses
  - Specialty Practice Registered Nurses

### WHERE PROVIDERS SERVE

Providers must serve in areas of the state with a defined need for such services.

### FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Providers can enter into an agreement up to 5 years.

Discipline	State Award	Community Match
Physician	\$100,000	\$50,000
APRN, PA	\$20,000	\$2,000
Clinical Psychologist	\$60,000	\$15,000
Behavioral Health	\$20,000	\$2,000

### PROVIDER SELECTION CRITERIA

- Health care professional's specialty
- Need for the specialty in the area
- Education and experience
- Date of availability and anticipated term of availability
- Willingness to accept Medicaid and Medicare patients
- Length of residency in North Dakota
- Attendance at an in-state or out-of-state institution

### COMMUNITY SELECTION CRITERIA

Public and private entities are eligible for this program.

Site criteria is based on the following factors:

- Located in an area that is statistically underserved
- Located at least 20 miles outside the boundary of a city with more than 40,000

## NORTH DAKOTA DENTAL Loan Repayment Program

### ELIGIBLE DISCIPLINES

General/Pediatric Dentistry (DDS, DMD)

### WHERE PROVIDERS SERVE

Dentists must serve a public health clinic, practice with a focus on an underserved population, or a nonprofit clinic.

### FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Providers can enter into an agreement up to 5 years for a total award of \$100,000.

### PROVIDER SELECTION CRITERIA

- Be fully licensed to practice in North Dakota;
- Dentist located in a federally designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Area or a state-defined critical shortage area;
- Dentists trained in general or pediatric dentistry or in a dental specialty where such services are needed in the identified city or surrounding areas;
- Accept Medicare and Medicaid patients; and
- A dentist selected for loan repayment who practices within fifteen miles (24.14 kilometers) of the city limits of one of the three largest cities in the state must:
  - have received dental medical payments of twenty thousand dollars in the form of medical assistance reimbursement; or
  - have practiced at least two full workdays per week at a public health clinic or a nonprofit dental clinic that uses a sliding fee schedule for patient billing.

### COMMUNITY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Priority is given to sites or clinics in the following categories: dental services provided in a public health clinic, a practice with a focus on an underserved population, or a nonprofit dental clinic.



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Bobbie Will • blwill@nd.gov • 701-595-2676  
North Dakota State Loan Repayment Programs  
<http://www.ndhealth.gov/pco/main.asp>  
<https://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/primary-care-office>

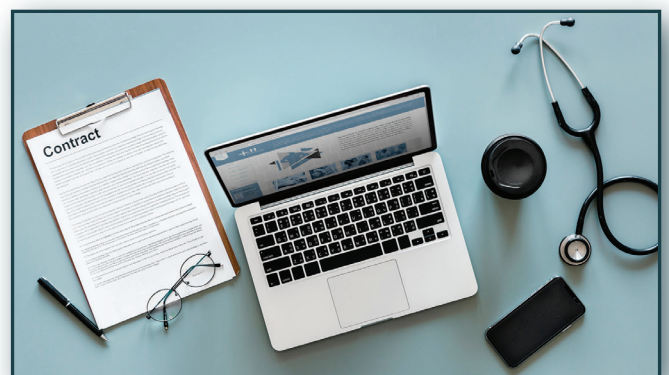
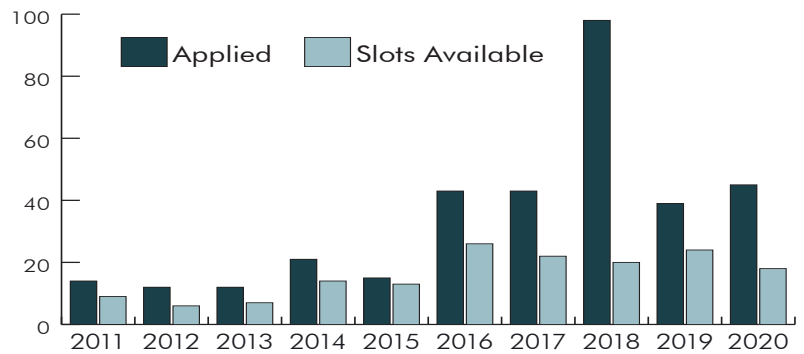


Photo by rawpixel on Unsplash

## LOAN REPAYMENT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED VS SLOTS AVAILABLE

Summary of total loan repayment applicants verses the number of awards available based on funding for the years 2011 through 2020.

Includes Dentists, Physicians, Advanced Practice Providers (PA & NP), Psychologists, Behavioral Health Providers.



## THE NEED VS FUNDING AVAILABLE

	Dentists	Physicians	Advanced Practice Providers (PA & NP)	Psychologists	Behavioral Health Providers
<b>2011</b>					
Number Applied	8	3	3	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	3	n/a	n/a
<b>2012</b>					
Number Applied	8	4	0	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	info unavailable	n/a	n/a
<b>2013</b>					
Number Applied	8	4	0	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	4	info unavailable	n/a	n/a
<b>2014</b>					
Number Applied	5	12	4	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	7	4	n/a	n/a
<b>2015</b>					
Number Applied	5	3	7	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	7	n/a	n/a
<b>2016</b>					
Number Applied	8	7	11	1	16
Number Available to Award based on funding	8	3	4	1	10
<b>2017</b>					
Number Applied	9	11	12	1	10
Number Available to Award based on funding	4	4	4	1	9
<b>2018</b>					
Number Applied	7	7	15	5	64
Number Available to Award based on funding	4	4	4	2	6
<b>2019 \$900,000 ND State Appropriations</b>					
Number Applied	7	10	7	0	15
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	3	3	12
<b>2020 \$900,000 ND State Appropriations</b>					
Number Applied	7	9	7	4	18
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	4	3	2	6

### PHYSICIANS

1993-2020

56 CONTRACTS COMPLETED

**66%**

OF THE CONTRACTED REMAIN IN ND

### DENTISTS

2001-2020

45 CONTRACTS COMPLETED

**87%**

OF THE CONTRACTED REMAIN IN ND

### PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

1994-2020

14 CONTRACTS COMPLETED

**71%**

OF THE CONTRACTED REMAIN IN ND

### NURSE PRACTITIONERS

1997-2020

15 CONTRACTS COMPLETED

**67%**

OF THE CONTRACTED REMAIN IN ND



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Website: [www.thearcofbismarck.org](http://www.thearcofbismarck.org)

**Testimony of Support Senate Bill 2125**  
**Senate Human Services**  
**January 12, 2021**

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Kirsten Dvorak. I am the executive director of The Arc of North Dakota, which includes all six Arc chapters in North Dakota: Bismarck, Bowman, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Valley City. Our mission is to improve people's quality of life with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and community participation.

The Arc of North Dakota asks for a Do Pass on SB 2125.

There is a shortage of Licensed behavior analysts in our state. With student loan repayments, this will incentivize students to becoming behavior analysts in our state. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a proven form of therapy for specialized individuals for each individual. Behavior analysts are crucial to working with the individual to make sure that they are meeting their goals. Such as learning to be successful in a classroom, personal hygiene, and eating the dinner table.

ABA can also help adults who need help with daily tasks and even support them at their job. However, there is not enough behavior analysis to support ABA, and individuals are waiting to get help.

With the passing of SB 2125, this should close a gap needed in our special needs community.



1/12/2021

**Legislative Testimony – Senate Bill No. 2125**

**North Dakota Senate Human Services Committee**

Madame Chair Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

My name is Tim Eissinger, CEO of the Anne Carlsen Center. I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 2125.

North Dakota faced a clinical workforce shortage well before the COVID-19 pandemic struck our state, and the pandemic's impact on the mental health of our professional workforce may only serve to exacerbate it. North Dakota's current unemployment rate hovers around 4% and would appear to show that we continue to face a shortage of qualified individuals available to meet the demand for highly skilled clinical roles.

Anne Carlsen has aggressively tried to recruit out-of-state providers to come to North Dakota, but often we get little to no response, and many we have recruited do not have the work ethic and resilience to stay. Our best strategy has been the "home grown" approach, whereby we have invested in an employee's professional education based on the needs and growth of our programs. I believe the ability to work collaboratively with the State through the proposed student loan forgiveness or repayment program gives North Dakota its best chance of fielding the professional workforce North Dakota needs now, and well into the future. It would keep North Dakota employees in the identified field's student loan debt to a manageable amount and get them started in a healthcare or related career in North Dakota that is likely to keep them in this State.

I am very much in support of this bill and would be happy to address any questions you might have.

Thank you,

**Tim Eissinger**

Chief Executive Officer

Anne Carlsen Center

Office: 701-952-5187

[tim.eissinger@annecenter.org](mailto:tim.eissinger@annecenter.org)



[annecarlsen.org](http://annecarlsen.org)

The Anne Carlsen Center exists to make the world a more inclusive place where independence is a gift to all.

BISMARCK • BOTTINEAU • DEVILS LAKE • FARGO • GRAND FORKS • JAMESTOWN • MINOT • MOORHEAD

**Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 2125 – Relating to the Health Care Professional**  
**Student Loan Repayment Program**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Judy Lee, Chairman**  
January 12, 2021

Chairwoman Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

Greetings. Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

I am Cristine Deaver, Licensed and Board Certified Behavior Analyst and member and President of the North Dakota Association for Behavior Analysis (NDABA). I have provided behavioral services within rural school settings for almost 20 year and have taught graduate level students at the University of North Dakota's Applied Behavior Analysis program for 7 years. I consult with teachers and families as we work collaboratively to serve students with behavioral needs.

I am writing in support of the Senate Bill 2125 which seeks to add Behavior Analysts to the list of professionals who may qualify for this student loan forgiveness program. Behavior Analysts are a relatively new group of licensed professionals in North Dakota. We provide services to individuals with behavioral health concerns by collaborating with the individual, care providers, and other professionals working with the individual.

I have observed a growing need for behavioral health services for individuals in North Dakota. I believe we should take steps to train, recruit and retain professionals to provide high quality care within North Dakota.

In summary, please consider approving the added language to SB 2125 for Behavior Analysts to be a recognized behavioral health profession. It is imperative to include Behavior Analysts as recognized behavioral health professionals to retain and draw more professionals to North Dakota, and ultimately, to better serve individuals within our state who struggle with behavioral health problems. By adding Behavior Analysts to the list of recognized behavioral health professions, another small but growing group of professionals may be able to further assist this growing population of individuals who require significant behavioral health care.

All opinions expressed here are my own. These opinions in no way represent the University of North Dakota nor my current place of employment. This testimony has been provided on my personal time.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony. If I can be of assistance during this time of deliberation, please contact me at [cdeaver@csicable.net](mailto:cdeaver@csicable.net). This concludes my testimony.

Sincerely,

Cristine Deaver, MS, BCBA, LBA  
Board Certified Behavior Analyst #1-09-6409  
ND Licensed Behavior Analyst #L4

**Testimony**  
**Sensate Bill 2125 - Department of Human Services**  
**Senate Human Services Committee**  
**Senator Lee, Chairman**  
**January 12, 2021**

Chairman Lee, and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Rosalie Etherington, Superintendent of the North Dakota State Hospital (NDSH) of the Department of Human Services (Department). I am here on behalf of the Department in support for Senate Bill 2125.

The North Dakota State Hospital and the Human Service Center clinicians have recurrently benefited from the health care professional student loan repayment program. This program has helped us recruit and retain physicians, addiction counselors, psychologists, and nurses.

North Dakota has a healthcare provider shortage statewide. Student loan repayment, although one solution of many, is key for attracting and retaining healthcare professionals, particularly in our rural areas.

Adding licensed behavior analysts to the list of eligible recipients supports the needs of North Dakota to attract and retain them in our workforce. The extreme shortage of licensed behavior analysts negatively impacts the needs of individuals with intellectual and behavioral health disabilities. Please vote do pass on Senate Bill 2125.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you.

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Human Services Committee Sakakawea Room, State Capitol

SB 2125  
1/18/2021

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 1 of section 43-12.3-06 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the health care professional student loan repayment program.

**Madam Chair Lee** opened discussion on SB 2125 at 3:00 p.m. Members present; Senator Lee, Senator K. Roers, Senator Hogan, Senator Anderson, Senator Clemens. Senator O. Larsen was absent.

### Discussion Topics:

- Holding for SB 2177

**Senator K. Roers** moved **DO PASS**.

**Senator Anderson** seconded.

Senators	Vote
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Howard C. Anderson, Jr.	Y
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Oley Larsen	Absent

The motion passed 5-0-1

**Senator Anderson** will carry SB 2125.

**Additional written testimony:** N/A

**Madam Chair Lee** moved on to discuss SB 2148 at 3:04 p.m.

*Justin Velez, Committee Clerk*



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2125: Human Services Committee (Sen. Lee, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2125 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

**2021 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES**

**SB 2125**

# 2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2125  
3/17/2021 AM

Relating to the healthcare professional student loan repayment program
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**Chairman Weisz** opened the committee hearing at 10:01 a.m.

Representatives	Attendance
Representative Robin Weisz	P
Representative Karen M. Rohr	P
Representative Mike Beltz	P
Representative Chuck Damschen	P
Representative Bill Devlin	P
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	P
Representative Clayton Fegley	P
Representative Dwight Kiefert	P
Representative Todd Porter	P
Representative Matthew Ruby	P
Representative Mary Schneider	A
Representative Kathy Skroch	P
Representative Bill Tveit	P
Representative Greg Westlind	P

### Discussion Topics:

- Licensed Behavior Analyst
- Mental Health Professional Shortage

**Sen. Kristin Roers, District 27 (10:02)** introduced the bill.

**Holly Johnson, Licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Founding Member & Past President North Dakota Association for Behavior Analysis, Appointed Member Governor's Autism Spectrum Disorder (10:05)** testified in favor and submitted testimony #9664, #9665, & #9666.

**Kelly Nagel, Director Office of Systems and Performance North Dakota Department of Health (10:13)** testified neutral and submitted testimony #9525.

**Additional written testimony:** #9753.

**Chairman Weisz** adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

*Tamara Krause, Committee Clerk*

**Testimony**  
**Senate Bill 2089 – Health Care Professional Student Loan Repayment Program**  
**House Human Services Committee**  
**Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman**  
March 17, 2021

Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

I am Holly Johnson, a Licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst, founding member and Past President of the North Dakota Association for Behavior Analysis (NDABA), and an appointed member of the Governor's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force. I live in Minot, and provide behavioral health services through the Developmental Disabilities Behavioral Health Services (DD BHS) division out of the Life Skills & Transition Center. My service delivery area spreads from the Devils Lake region to the Williston Basin region, and as far southeast as New Rockford. I deliver services in 14 ND counties identified as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the ND Primary Care Office. I am currently the sole traveling Behavior Analyst (BA) in those areas. It is a person, core value for me to provide services to the underserved regions and rural areas of this great state. I consult with families, schools, and provide providers serving people with complex behavioral needs, providing behavioral intervention billed through Medicaid, private insurance, or private contracts. I have worked collaboratively with individuals, their caregivers, and their team of professionals in behavioral assessment, skills training, and integrated staff interventions for clients with acute and chronic mental illness (e.g., mood, anxiety, personality, and psychotic disorders) as well as acute and chronic medical illness (e.g., severe seizure disorders, rare chromosomal abnormalities, feeding disorders, and post-surgical rehabilitation), which occur comorbidly with developmental and/or intellectual disability.

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been made available to physicians, clinical psychologists, advance practice nurses, and physician assistants. Behavioral health professionals, which currently includes licensed addiction counselor, licensed professional counselor, licensed social worker, registered nurse, or speciality practice registered nurse, were added in 2016. Further information on the State Loan Repayment Programs can be found in the attached fact sheet and on the Primary Care Office website: [www.ndhealth.gov/pco/main.asp](http://www.ndhealth.gov/pco/main.asp) in the Program Resources tab.

The State Health Council administers, develops, and establishes criteria for this student loan repayment program. During a special meeting held December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Health Council members voted to move forward with legislation to add BAs to NDCC Chapter 43-12.30-06 e. The amended language in SB 2125 will allow the State Health Council to consider awarding a student repayment loan to a licensed behavior analyst along with the current five disciplines listed in this section of NDCC. The selection criteria, state award, community match, and eligibility for participation would not change. Adopting this legislation would merely make us and eligible profession for this program.

In the attachments I provided, you will see how BAs compare to the other behavioral health professionals that are currently eligible, including the number of ND licensed professionals in each discipline (as of 1/1/2021). You can also see the concentration of BAs geographically across ND. In ND, 91% of counties are fully or partially designated as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas. The demand for BAs in ND greatly exceeds the supply, especially in addition to the geographical location of professionals by comparison to those identified Mental Health Professional Shortage areas. Above the side-by-side comparison, you will see the discipline areas BAs provide services to nationally. BAs can provide behavioral health services to literally any demographic or group of people. ASD is the highest nationally due to mandated insurance coverage and funding for services available specific to that population of people.

I applied for this student loan repayment program in March of 2018 and was automatically denied because my profession was not included in the language of recognized behavioral health professions. I also supervise BA graduate students. Four out of twelve of those students (or 1 in 3), who were ND residents during their study, have left to pursue better job opportunities (e.g., more pay, better incentives, higher insurance reimbursements, and loan repayment programs) in other states (specifically Washington, Michigan, Connecticut, and California). We will not be able to recruit and retain adequate workforce, especially to serve the rural Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas of ND without incentives such as this student loan program available to my profession.

In summary, please consider approving the added language to SB 2125 for Licensed Behavior Analysts to be a recognized behavioral health profession. It is imperative to include Behavior Analysts as eligible behavioral health professionals to retain and entice more professionals to this state. Ultimately, to better serve the remote, rural, and underserved regions who lack Behavior Analysts as an option for their behavioral health needs.

All opinion expressed here is my own. These opinions in no way represent the Department of Human Services or the Life Skills & Transition Center, all of which I am actively involved with, adding to my unique perspective contained in this testimony. This testimony has been provided on my personal time. Thank you for your time and consideration. If I can be of any assistance during this time of deliberation, please contact me at [holly.johnson.bcba@outlook.com](mailto:holly.johnson.bcba@outlook.com). This concludes my testimony and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Holly Johnson, MS, BCBA, LBA  
Board Certified Behavior Analyst #1-14-15198  
ND Licensed Behavior Analyst #L15

# Behavior Analysts serve a variety of populations with behavioral health needs.

## Behavior Analysts Primary Area of Professional Emphasis (National):

#9665

### 74.01%: Autism Spectrum

10.56%: Education

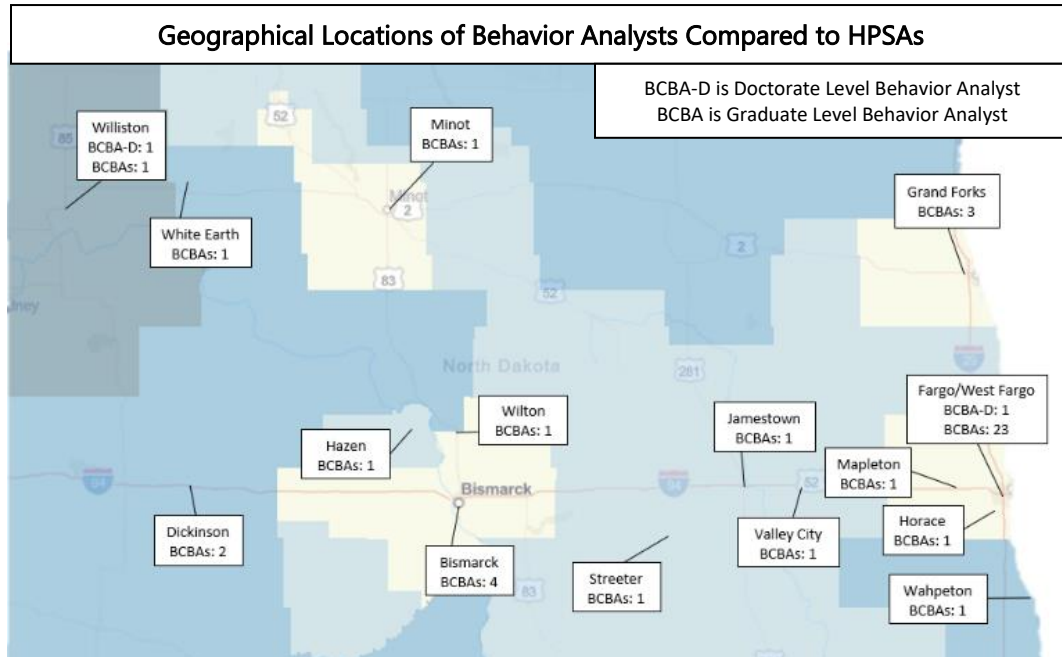
5.09%: Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

3.02%: Clinical

1.11%: Higher Education

>1%:

- Health, Sports, & Fitness
- Public Policy & Advocacy
- Professional Supervision
- Parent & Caregiver Training
- Organizational Behavior Management
- Non-University Research
- Dissemination of Behavior Analysis
- Corrections & Delinquency
- Child Welfare
- Brain Injury Rehab
- Behavioral Gerontology



### Comparison to other Behavioral Health Disciplines:

Discipline	Licensed Behavior Analysts	Licensed Addiction Counselors	Licensed Professional Counselors	Licensed Social Workers	Registered Nurses & Specialty Practice RNs
Numbers	LBAs=55	LACs=322	LPC/LPCC=492	LBSW=1609 LMSW=410 LCSW=445	RNs=16,198 Specialty RNs=4
Licensing Board & Fees	Integrative Healthcare Board (prior to 2020 was Board of Psych Examiners) Exam=\$370 Application=\$500 (2-years)	Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners Exam=\$200 Application=\$300 (2-years)	Board of Counselor Examiners Exam=\$375 Application=\$150	Board of Social Work Examiners Application=\$100	Board of Nursing Application=\$125
Education Level	Graduate	Graduate	Graduate	Baccalaureate, Master, Clinical	Baccalaureate, Graduate, Doctorate
Clinical Training Required	1500-2000 hrs. (100-150 hrs. supervised)	700 hrs. (140 hrs. supervised)	100 hrs practicum + 600 hrs. internship (100 hrs. supervised)	400 hrs of client contact (100 hrs. supervised)	Graduate=3 semesters of practicum
Cost of Tuition at UND  (Total Cost Calculated Using Online Per Credit)	Online=\$559/credit x (32 credit hours + 19 credit hours for ABA) = \$28,509	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus=\$533/credit</li> <li>• Online=\$872/credit x 20 credit hours = \$17,440</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus=\$533/credit</li> <li>• Online=\$872/credit x 60-71 credit hours = \$61,912</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus=\$434/credit (undergrad) x 120 credit hours = \$52,080</li> <li>• Campus=\$541/credit (graduate)</li> <li>• Online=\$697/credit x 36-60 credit hours (graduate) = \$41,820</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus=\$489/credit (undergrad)</li> <li>• Online=\$502/credit (undergrad) x 121 credit hours = \$60,742</li> <li>Online=\$856/credit (graduate) x 49 credits (PMHNP) = \$41,944</li> </ul>
Average Salary (State of ND)	\$58,524-\$69,864	\$58,524-\$76,908	\$84,780	\$51,630-\$69,864	\$58,524-\$76,980 (RNs) \$99,468-\$169,450 (PMHNP)

# LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM FACTS

## NORTH DAKOTA HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL Student Loan Repayment Program

### ELIGIBLE DISCIPLINES

- Physicians
- Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
- Physician Assistants
- Clinical Psychologists  
(licensed by the State Board of Psychologist Examiners)
- Behavioral Health Professionals
  - Licensed Addiction Counselors
  - Licensed Professional Counselors
  - Licensed Social Workers
  - Registered Nurses
  - Specialty Practice Registered Nurses

### WHERE PROVIDERS SERVE

Providers must serve in areas of the state with a defined need for such services.

### FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Providers can enter into an agreement up to 5 years.

Discipline	State Match	Community Match
Physician	\$100,000	\$50,000
APRN, PA	\$20,000	\$2,000
Clinical Psychologist	\$60,000	\$15,000
Behavioral Health	\$20,000	\$2,000

### PROVIDER SELECTION CRITERIA

- Health care professional's specialty
- Need for the specialty in the area
- Education and experience
- Date of availability and anticipated term of availability
- Willingness to accept Medicaid and Medicare patients
- Length of residency in North Dakota
- Attendance at an in-state or out-of-state institution

### COMMUNITY SELECTION CRITERIA

Public and private entities are eligible for this program.

Site criteria is based on the following factors:

- Located in an area that is statistically underserved
- Located at least 20 miles outside the boundary of a city with more than 40,000

## NORTH DAKOTA DENTAL Loan Repayment Program

### ELIGIBLE DISCIPLINES

General/Pediatric Dentistry (DDS, DMD)

#9666

### WHERE PROVIDERS SERVE

Dentists must serve a public health clinic, practice with a focus on an underserved population, or a nonprofit clinic.

### FINANCIAL BENEFITS

Providers can enter into an agreement up to 5 years for a total award of \$100,000.

### PROVIDER SELECTION CRITERIA

- Be fully licensed to practice in North Dakota;
- Dentist located in a federally designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Area or a state-defined critical shortage area;
- Dentists trained in general or pediatric dentistry or in a dental specialty where such services are needed in the identified city or surrounding areas;
- Accept Medicare and Medicaid patients; and
- A dentist selected for loan repayment who practices within fifteen miles (24.14 kilometers) of the city limits of one of the three largest cities in the state must:
  - have received dental medical payments of twenty thousand dollars in the form of medical assistance reimbursement; or
  - have practiced at least two full workdays per week at a public health clinic or a nonprofit dental clinic that uses a sliding fee schedule for patient billing.

### COMMUNITY SELECTION CRITERIA

- Priority is given to sites or clinics in the following categories: dental services provided in a public health clinic, a practice with a focus on an underserved population, or a nonprofit dental clinic.

NORTH  
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Be Legendary.™

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North Dakota State Loan Repayment Programs  
<http://www.ndhealth.gov/pco/main.asp>  
<https://ruralhealth.und.edu/projects/primary-care-office>



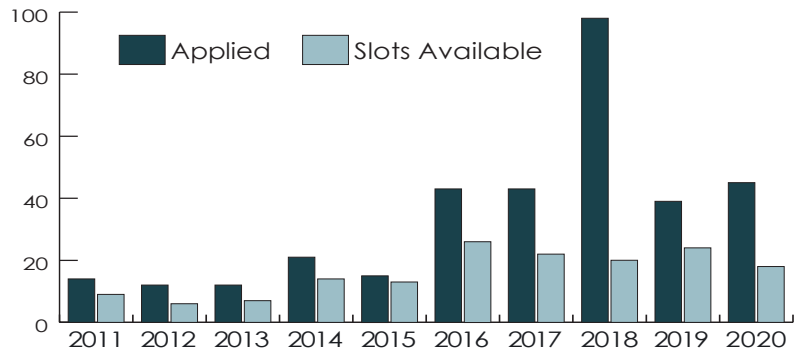
Photo by rawpixel on Unsplash



## LOAN REPAYMENT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED VS SLOTS AVAILABLE

Summary of total loan repayment applicants verses the number of awards available based on funding for the years 2011 through 2020.

Includes Dentists, Physicians, Advanced Practice Providers (PA & NP), Psychologists, Behavioral Health Providers.



## THE NEED VS FUNDING AVAILABLE

	Dentists	Physicians	Advanced Practice Providers (PA & NP)	Psychologists	Behavioral Health Providers
<b>2011</b>					
Number Applied	8	3	3	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	3	n/a	n/a
<b>2012</b>					
Number Applied	8	4	0	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	info unavailable	n/a	n/a
<b>2013</b>					
Number Applied	8	4	0	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	4	info unavailable	n/a	n/a
<b>2014</b>					
Number Applied	5	12	4	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	7	4	n/a	n/a
<b>2015</b>					
Number Applied	5	3	7	n/a	n/a
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	7	n/a	n/a
<b>2016</b>					
Number Applied	8	7	11	1	16
Number Available to Award based on funding	8	3	4	1	10
<b>2017</b>					
Number Applied	9	11	12	1	10
Number Available to Award based on funding	4	4	4	1	9
<b>2018</b>					
Number Applied	7	7	15	5	64
Number Available to Award based on funding	4	4	4	2	6
<b>2019 \$900,000 ND State Appropriations</b>					
Number Applied	7	10	7	0	15
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	3	3	3	12
<b>2020 \$900,000 ND State Appropriations</b>					
Number Applied	7	9	7	4	18
Number Available to Award based on funding	3	4	3	2	6

### PHYSICIANS

1993-2020

56 contracts completed

**66%**

of the contracted remain in ND

### DENTISTS

2001-2020

45 contracts completed

**87%**

of the contracted remain in ND

### PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

1994-2020

14 contracts completed

**71%**

of the contracted remain in ND

### NURSE PRACTITIONERS

1997-2020

15 contracts completed

**67%**

of the contracted remain in ND

Good Morning Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Kelly Nagel and I am the Director of the Office of Systems and Performance with the North Dakota Department of Health. I oversee the North Dakota Department of Health, Primary Care Office. I do not have testimony for SB 2125 but want to let you know I am available to answer questions, if needed. Thank You.



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Website: [www.thearcofbismarck.org](http://www.thearcofbismarck.org)

**Testimony of Support Senate Bill 2125  
House Human Services  
March 17, 2021**

Chairman Weisz and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, my name is Kirsten Dvorak. I am the executive director of The Arc of North Dakota, which includes all six Arc chapters in North Dakota: Bismarck, Bowman, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Valley City. Our mission is to improve people's quality of life with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and community participation.

The Arc of North Dakota asks for a Do Pass on SB 2125.

There is a shortage of Licensed behavior analysts in our state. With student loan repayments, this will incentivize students to becoming behavior analysts in our state. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a proven form of therapy for specialized individuals for each individual. Behavior analysts are crucial to working with the individual to make sure that they are meeting their goals. Such as learning to be successful in a classroom, personal hygiene, and eating the dinner table.

ABA can also help adults who need help with daily tasks and even support them at their job. However, there is not enough behavior analysis to support ABA, and individuals are waiting to get help.

With the passing of SB 2125, this should close a gap needed in our special needs community.

# 2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

SB 2125  
3/17/2021 PM

Relating to the healthcare professional student loan repayment program
--

**Chairman Weisz** opened the committee meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Representatives	Attendance
Representative Robin Weisz	P
Representative Karen M. Rohr	P
Representative Mike Beltz	P
Representative Chuck Damschen	P
Representative Bill Devlin	P
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	P
Representative Clayton Fegley	P
Representative Dwight Kiefert	P
Representative Todd Porter	P
Representative Matthew Ruby	P
Representative Mary Schneider	P
Representative Kathy Skroch	P
Representative Bill Tveit	P
Representative Greg Westlind	P

### Discussion Topics:

- Behavior health analyst program addition
- Critical shortage area

**Rep. Matthew Ruby (2:40)** moved **Do Pass**

**Rep. Gretchen Dobervich (2:40)** second

Representatives	Vote
Representative Robin Weisz	Y
Representative Karen M. Rohr	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Chuck Damschen	Y
Representative Bill Devlin	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Clayton Fegley	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Mary Schneider	Y
Representative Kathy Skroch	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y

Representative Greg Westlind	Y
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**Motion Carried Do Pass 14-0-0**

**Bill Carrier:** Rep. Greg Westlind

**Chairman Weisz** adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

*Tamara Krause, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2125: Human Services Committee (Rep. Weisz, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS**  
(14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2125 was placed on the  
Fourteenth order on the calendar.