

2025 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

HCR 3014

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HCR 3014
2/12/2025

A concurrent resolution urging public health, health care systems, and health care providers to prioritize primary prevention in addressing vitamin D deficiency through multifaceted precision public health and medicine approaches.

8:59 a.m. Chairman M. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman M. Ruby, Vice-Chairman Frelich, Representatives K. Anderson, Beltz, Bolinske, Davis, Dobervich, Fegley, Holle, Kiefert, Rios, Rohr

Members Absent: Representative Hendrix

Discussion Topics:

- Mental health and wellness
- Benefits of high vitamin D levels

9:01 a.m. Representative Rohr, District 31, introduced the resolution.

9:03 a.m. Beth Sanford, President of the North Dakota Nurses Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony, #37042.

9:21 a.m. Sherri Miller, Executive Director of the North Dakota Nurses Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony, #37247.

9:24 a.m. Chairman M. Ruby closed the hearing.

9:24 a.m. Representative K. Anderson moved a Do Pass.

9:24 a.m. Vice-Chairman Frelich seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Matthew Ruby	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Karen Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Macy Bolinske	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	AB
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Cleyton Fegley	Y
Representative Jared Hendrix	AB
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Nico Rios	Y
Representative Karen Rohr	Y

9:26 a.m. Motion passed 11-0-2.

9:27 a.m. Representative Rohr moved to place HCR 3014 on the consent calendar.

9:27 a.m. Representative Dobervich seconded the motion.

9:27 a.m. Voice vote passed.

Representative Bolinske will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Jerry Obritsch, Physician and ob/gyn, submitted testimony in favor, #37253.

Erin Berentson, North Dakota Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, submitted testimony in favor, #37256.

Thomas Arnold, Chairman of the North Dakota Maternal Mortality Review Committee, submitted testimony in favor, #36877.

Genevieve Hudgins, with the Roots of Wellness, PLLC, submitted testimony in favor, #37139.

Andy McLean, private citizen, submitted testimony in favor, #37181.

9:28 a.m. Chairman M. Ruby closed the meeting.

Jackson Toman, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HCR 3014 ([25.3030.01000](#))

Human Services Committee (Rep. M. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** and **BE PLACED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR** (11 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3014 was placed on the Tenth order on the calendar.

February 9, 2025

Representative Karen M. Rohr
Representative - District 31
Mandan, ND
Email: kmrohr@ndlegis.gov

Dear Representative Rohr,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the proposed House Concurrent Resolution No. 3014 introduced by: Representatives Rohr, K. Anderson, Dobervich, Frelich, McLeod, Meier, M. Ruby and Senators Dwyer, Hogue and Myrdal. This resolution urges public health, healthcare systems and healthcare providers to prioritize primary prevention in addressing Vitamin D deficiency through multifaceted precision public health and medicine approaches. As the Chair of the North Dakota Maternal Mortality Review Committee, the health and wellbeing of North Dakota's female population and especially our preconceptual, prenatal and postpartum patients is our primary focus.

It is well-appreciated that the benefits of Vitamin D supplementation, providing for adequate blood levels, is important in many facets of our health. Although we can naturally produce Vitamin D, it is directly dependent upon adequate sun exposure which, by the nature of our North Dakota climate, is very often a challenge. There exists a large body of research, done over the last two decades, that associates adequate Vitamin D levels with improved health in several facets of disease prevention and medical care.

A very nice summary of the Endocrine Society's Clinical Practice Guidelines on Vitamin D blood levels and supplementation is reviewed in the following article: M.F. Holick, Revisiting Vitamin D Guidelines: A Critical Appraisal of the Literature, Endocrine Practice, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eprac.2024.10.011>. Although bone health has long been known to be improved with Vitamin D supplementation many other areas also appear to benefit. These include reduction in preeclampsia during pregnancy, a decline in premature births and a decrease in cesarean section rates. Supplementation certainly is noted to decrease dental caries in children and reduce the diagnosis of diabetes in adults along with increasing the likelihood of glucose level regression to normal in a significant percentage of diabetic patients. There was noted to be a decreased mortality rate in cardiovascular patients, a lessened risk of respiratory tract infections in children and adolescents and a reduced risk of developing autoimmune disease. Research over the past four decades has revealed the multifaceted actions of Vitamin D in maintaining cellular health, which in turn, may play a role in decreasing cancer incidence. And finally, there is an association between Vitamin D deficiency and disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, dementia and mental health conditions such as depression and addiction.

As can be appreciated by these research supported associations between adequate Vitamin D levels and the maintenance and improvement in many aspects of our health, the recommendation for evaluating Vitamin D levels, prescribing supplementation as indicated and continuing to evaluate outcomes is essential. Therefore, I unreservedly support passage of this resolution.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this important legislation. It has the potential to improve the health and wellbeing of a large percentage of our North Dakota citizens.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Arnold, MD, FACOG, FACS
Chair-North Dakota Maternal Mortality Review Committee

Testimony for Concurrent Resolution 3014

2/10/2025

Chairman Weisz and the members of the House Human Services committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of proposed Concurrent Resolution 3014 regarding the prioritization of primary prevention strategies to address vitamin D deficiency in the state of North Dakota.

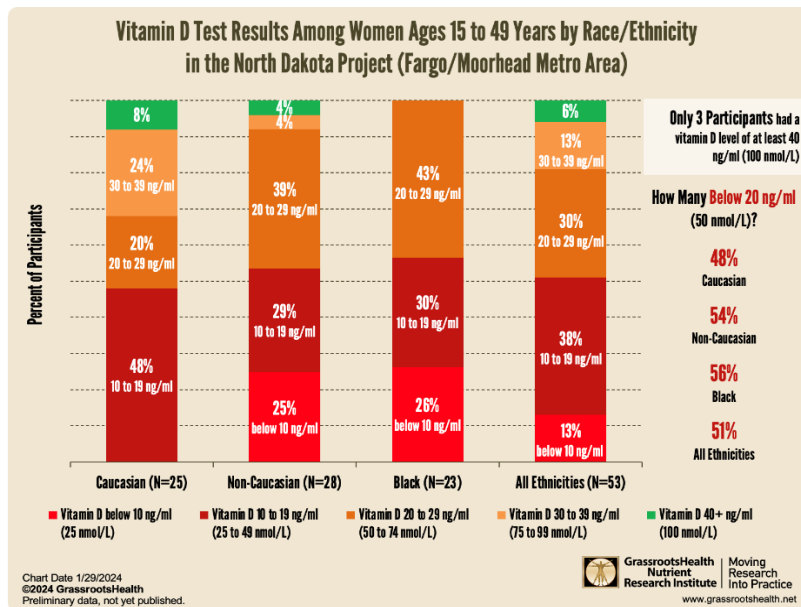
Vitamin D, a fat-soluble nutrient, is crucial for maintaining bone health, regulating the immune system, and supporting cellular functions throughout every cell in the body. Despite its critical role in overall health, it is estimated that a significant portion of the population is deficient in vitamin D. This deficiency is particularly prevalent among individuals with limited sun exposure, those living in northern latitudes, older adults, and people with darker skin tones.

In our state, the ray of the sun needed to generate vitamin D doesn't hit the earth for six months of the year from October to April making North Dakotans more at risk for vitamin D deficiency than individuals living at other latitudes.

Preliminary data from GrassrootsHealth Nutrient Research Institute's North Dakota Vitamin D Project shows that overall, 50% of North Dakotans are considered vitamin D deficient <20 ng/mL with 20% being dismally lower than 10 ng/mL vs. the national average 26 ng/mL. Furthermore, project data shows that 90+% are below the scientific recommended serum concentrations of 40-70 ng/mL (Grant et al., 2025). See

<https://www.grassrootshhealth.net/blog/dismal-vitamin-d-results-among-participants-north-dakota-project/> for 2022 preliminary data.

In 2024, the North Dakota Vitamin D Project found dismal results again among childbearing age women (overall 51% below 20 ng/mL), with a large disparity between Caucasian and non-Caucasian women as 25% of non-Caucasian women had levels less than 10 ng/mL (n=53) (Sanford et al., 2024). If these women became pregnant, these levels would be dangerous to the health of mom and baby as the demand for vitamin D increases significantly during pregnancy.



Health Benefits of Vitamin D

Research indicates that adequate vitamin D levels are associated with a wide range of health benefits beyond bone health, such as:

1. Cardiovascular disease, including hypertension, stroke, myocardial infarction and migraine headaches
2. Cancer prevention and survival
3. Immune system support and COVID-19
4. Chronic lower respiratory disease
5. Cognitive and mental health, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, ADHD, autism, and more
6. Types 1 and 2 Diabetes
7. Chronic kidney disease
8. Bone and oral health
9. Autoimmune diseases
10. Pregnancy, birth and infancy outcomes, such pre-eclampsia and preterm birth
11. All-cause mortality

Why put forth a concurrent resolution?

Increasing awareness of vitamin D deficiency can improve population health and educate both the public and healthcare professionals. In addition, research shows vitamin D deficiency is closely linked with increased healthcare costs. As far back as the early 2000's, the Veterans Administration system identified that addressing vitamin D deficiency lowered in-patient healthcare costs by 39-50% (Peiris et al., 2008; Bailey et al., 2012). Therefore, addressing vitamin D deficiency has the potential to significantly reduce state Medicaid and NDPERS costs and preserve healthcare dollars for North Dakotans and decrease human suffering.

What are the potential outcomes in human terms?

- Improved cognitive performance in North Dakotans from birth to our elderly residents, more focus for school-age children and adolescents
- Improved mental health outcomes and decreased suicide rates
- Improved prenatal and neonatal outcomes for moms and babies
- Increased chance of surviving the ambulance ride because of decreased intercranial swelling and endothelial stability of blood vessels
- Increased chance of surviving a heart attack, stroke or cancer
- Decreased surgical and hospital acquired infections
- Reduced sick days and workplace injuries

In conclusion, enhancing the health of North Dakota residents requires the implementation of policies that support primary prevention efforts. This includes acknowledging that North Dakota's geographic location poses a risk factor for vitamin D deficiency for every resident of the state. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize addressing vitamin D deficiency across all demographic groups to improve patient outcomes, enhance population health, and reduce healthcare costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Beth S. Sanford, DNP, RN

Lead researcher for the GrassrootsHealth Nutrient Research Institute's North Dakota Vitamin D Project
 Vitamin D researcher & advocate <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Beth-Sanford>
 President, North Dakota Nurses Association

REFERENCES

Related to cost-effectiveness

<https://www.grassrootshealth.net/blog/results-vitamin-d-testing-programs/> (Highlights the testing program at Vibra Hospital in Fargo, ND)

<https://www.grassrootshealth.net/blog/vitamin-d-testing-reduces-healthcare-costs-2/> (Highlights a cost comparison of six Veterans Affairs medical centers with 400,000 patients)

Published Scholarly Articles

Bailey, B. A., Manning, T., & Peiris, A. N. (2012). Vitamin D testing patterns among six Veterans Medical Centers in the Southeastern United States: links with medical costs. *Military medicine*, 177(1), 70–76.
<https://doi.org/10.7205/milmed-d-11-00204>

Grant, W. B., Wimalawansa, S. J., Pludowski, P., & Cheng, R. Z. (2025). Vitamin D: Evidence-Based Health Benefits and Recommendations for Population Guidelines. *Nutrients*, 17(2), 277. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu17020277>



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Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my enthusiastic support for the proposed House Concurrent Resolution No. 3014 introduced by: Representatives Rohr, K. Anderson, Dobovich, Frelich, McLeod, Meier, M. Ruby and Senators Dwyer, Hogue and Myrdal. This resolution urges the state legislature to encourage primary prevention in addressing Vitamin D deficiency as a state priority for its people. As a board certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, I am passionate about cognitive and mental health and would like to share with you some of the benefits of vitamin D and mental health.

Research increasingly points to the vital role Vitamin D plays in brain function and mental wellbeing, influencing mood regulation, cognitive development, and wide range of neurodegenerative disorders, cognitive decline, and mental health conditions (Alghamdi, 2024). These include:

- **Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia**
- **Cognitive Decline**
- **Parkinson's Disease**
- **Depression/Anxiety/Seasonal Affective Disorder**
- **Schizophrenia**
- **Autism & ADHD**
- **Migraines**
- **Multiple Sclerosis**
- **Impulsive & Addictive Behaviors**
- **Sleep Disorders**
- **Suicide**

Research on the impact of Vitamin D on dementia and Alzheimer's disease outcomes has yielded consistent results since 2010. Notably, a 2019 study by Chai et al. found a 25% reduction in the risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia for individuals with Vitamin D levels above 20 ng/ml. This finding reinforces the growing body of evidence that adequate Vitamin D levels may play a significant role in reducing the onset and progression of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Ensuring that North Dakotans maintain sufficient Vitamin D levels could therefore be a vital strategy for preventing or slowing cognitive decline as they age

In addition to its known impact on cognitive health, emerging research highlights the potential of Vitamin D in addressing the opioid crisis. Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES, 2003-2004) analyzed by Kemeny et al. (2021) revealed an inverse, dose-dependent relationship between Vitamin D levels and opioid use, independent of pain. The study found that individuals with higher Vitamin D levels had a significantly lower frequency of opioid use. Specifically, individuals with a Vitamin D level of 20 ng/ml (50 nmol/L) or higher had a 47% lower risk of opioid use compared to those with levels below 12 ng/ml (30 nmol/L). This finding underscores the broader health benefits of Vitamin D, not only for physical and cognitive health but also in potentially reducing reliance on opioid medications and their associated risks.

There is also compelling evidence linking low Vitamin D levels to increased suicide risk, a particularly urgent concern for veterans and service members. Studies show that 30-50% of veterans and service members have Vitamin D levels below 20 ng/ml (50 nmol/L), a threshold associated with a higher risk of suicide and self-harm. A 2023 study among U.S. Veterans found that Vitamin D supplementation was associated with a 45-48% lower risk of suicide attempts and self-harm. This research also revealed that the higher the dose of Vitamin D, the greater the reduction in risk, with a more significant benefit observed among Black veterans compared to White veterans. Further analysis based on baseline Vitamin D levels showed that veterans with initial Vitamin D levels between 0-19 ng/ml who were prescribed Vitamin D3 had a 64.1% reduced risk of suicide attempts compared to those who were not prescribed Vitamin D3. Additionally, for every percentage point increase in the average daily dose of Vitamin D3, a 13.8% reduction in risk was observed, demonstrating a clear, dose-dependent relationship. These findings suggest that Vitamin D supplementation could play a critical role in reducing suicide risk and improving mental health outcomes among veterans, a particularly vulnerable population (Lavigne & Gibbons, 2023).

Addressing Vitamin D deficiency through supplementation may help reduce the incidence or severity of these conditions, providing a preventive measure for cognitive decline and mental health challenges.

In a region like North Dakota, where prolonged winters and limited sunlight create natural barriers to adequate Vitamin D synthesis, the need for proactive supplementation and sensible sun exposure education is essential. As our understanding of Vitamin D's role in brain health grows, it becomes clear that public health initiatives targeting its deficiency will have far-reaching benefits, particularly in reducing mental health disorders, supporting cognitive function, and improving overall quality of life.

In light of this, prioritizing a primary prevention strategy that includes Vitamin D education among healthcare professionals and the public regarding strategies to maintain healthy Vitamin D levels, encouraging appropriate supplementation, and fostering ongoing research into its effects on cognitive health are essential for improving mental health outcomes in our state. Therefore, I strongly support the passage of this resolution.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this crucial initiative. By addressing Vitamin D deficiency from a primary health perspective, we have the potential to positively impact the lives of countless North Dakotans and enhance both their cognitive and mental wellbeing.

Warm regards,

Genevieve Hudgins, APRN, PMHNP-BC

ghudgins@rootsofwellnessmm.com

Fargo, North Dakota

References:

- AlGhamdi, S. A. (2024). Effectiveness of Vitamin D on Neurological and Mental Disorders. *Diseases*, 12(6), 131. <https://doi.org/10.3390/diseases12060131>
- Chai, B., Gao, F., Wu, R., Dong, T., Gu, C., Lin, Q., & Zhang, Y. (2019). Vitamin D deficiency as a risk factor for dementia and Alzheimer's disease: An updated meta-analysis. *BMC Neurology*, 19(1), 284. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12883-019-1500-6>
- Kemény, L. V., Robinson, K. C., Hermann, A. L., Walker, D. M., Regan, S., Yew, Y. W., Lai, Y. C., Theodosakis, N., Rivera, P. D., Ding, W., Yang, L., Beyer, T., Loh, Y.-H. E., Lo, J. A., van der Sande, A. A. J., Sarnie, W., Kotler, D., Hsiao, J. J., Su, M. Y., ... Fisher, D. E. (2021). Vitamin D deficiency exacerbates UV/endorphin and opioid addiction. *Science Advances*, 7(24), eabe4577. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abe4577>
- Lavigne, J. E., & Gibbons, J. B. (2023). The association between vitamin D serum levels, supplementation, and suicide attempts and intentional self-harm. *PloS One*, 18(2), e0279166. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0279166>

2/12/2025

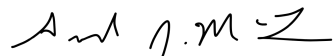
Dear Chairman Ruby and Committee Members,

I am Andy McLean, a physician specializing in psychiatry with public health training, born and raised in rural ND. I have practiced in ND the majority of my career and currently am in academic medicine. I am writing as a private citizen, representing only myself.

There is disagreement around the benefits of obtaining Vitamin D levels and subsequent supplementation. This is due in part to standards historically being tied to bone health, as well as interpretations of causal, rather than associative relationships with other illnesses. Viewed appropriately, HCR 3014 affords the opportunity for increasing awareness of Vitamin D deficiencies in relation to other conditions and hopefully leads organizations to advance science through robust research for the benefit of our citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. McLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "A" being large and prominent, followed by "J." and "McLean".

Andrew J. McLean, MD, MPH



✧ 1912-2025 ✧
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**House Human Services Committee
Representative Matthew Ruby, Chair
Testimony in Support of HCR 3014
Wednesday, February 12, 2025**

Good morning, Chairman Ruby, Vice Chairman Frelich, and Members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Sherri Miller, and I've been a registered nurse in North Dakota for nearly 26 years. I am also the Executive Director of the North Dakota Nurses Association (NDNA).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HCR 3014**.

As the only professional organization representing all North Dakota nurses, NDNA is a leading voice for our state's nursing professionals. Our organization strongly supports this concurrent resolution, recognizing its focus on the vital connection between vitamin D and mental health, and the importance of this essential nutrient for overall well-being.

Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to various mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety. Nurses who are deficient in vitamin D may experience reduced cognitive function, mental clarity, and physical reaction time, potentially impacting their ability to respond quickly and strategically in critical situations. Research also suggests that low vitamin D may be a risk factor for psychiatric and neurocognitive disorders, with longitudinal studies demonstrating a link between low vitamin D and increased cognitive decline, depression, and dementia. Importantly, some studies have shown cognitive improvements, particularly in executive functions and information processing speed, after just four weeks of vitamin D supplementation. Overall, vitamin D supplementation may benefit nurses by improving cognitive function, mental and physical health, and sleep quality.

Vitamin D status can influence nurses' job performance, and it can also reduce risk of injury and contribute to fewer sick days. Just as NDNA is deeply invested in supporting the nursing workforce through recruitment and retention initiatives, we are committed to keeping our nurses healthy and able to provide care for the citizens of North Dakota. This is one way we can do that.

NDNA's mission is to advance the nursing profession by promoting nurses' professional development, fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting workplace safety and well-being, and advocating health care issues affecting nurses and the public. We believe HCR 3014 will not only improve the quality of life for North Dakotans but also support our nurses in continuing their vital work caring for their patients.

We respectfully ask you to consider voting **YES** on HCR 3014. Thank you for the opportunity to present our support for this bill.

Sherri Miller, BS, BSN, RN
director@ndna.org
Executive Director
North Dakota Nurses Association

Human Services Committee

HCR 3014

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Chair Ruby and members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Dr. Jerry Obritsch and I am writing in support of House Concurrent Resolution 3014 introduced by Representative Rohr and colleagues. I am an Obstetrician/Gynecologist having practiced my entire career at Mid Dakota clinic, now Essentia Health, here in Bismarck, for the past 33 years.

HCR 3014 recognizes the importance of vitamin D in our diets and especially in the diet of the pregnant woman. In a recent study by Beck et al, in [The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition Volume 121, Issue 2](#), February 2025, Pages 376-384, entitled, "Maternal vitamin D status, fetal growth patterns, and adverse pregnancy outcomes in a multisite prospective pregnancy cohort", the findings underscore the importance of monitoring and potentially supplementing vitamin D in early pregnancy to improve birth outcomes. The study concludes, "early pregnancy vitamin D levels are crucial for fetal growth and reducing preterm birth risk". In 2023, North Dakota experienced a 10.3% live preterm birth rate) <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/united-states/prematurity-profile>). Although multifactorial in cause, any factor that will reduce live preterm deliveries needs to be seriously addressed and espoused. Vitamin D deficiency is indeed one area that can be concretely addressed.

I have read the testimony of my colleague, Dr. Tom Arnold, Chair of the North Dakota Maternal Mortality Review Committee. As a member of that committee as well, I highly respect his medical opinion and concur with his accurate testimony.

I respectfully request this committee support this legislation and am grateful and commend Representative Rohr and her colleagues for bringing this resolution forward for consideration. This resolution reflects the importance we need to place on maternal and fetal wellbeing. My goal in my Obstetrical practice has always been, "Healthy Mom and healthy baby".

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry M. Obritsch, MD, FACOG
Bismarck, ND

Testimony in Support of HCR 3014

Dear Chairman Ruby and Members of the Human Services Committee:

The North Dakota Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (NDAND) supports HCR 3014, a concurrent resolution aimed at raising public and professional awareness of vitamin D deficiency and promoting primary prevention through comprehensive health strategies.

NDAND represents Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) in North Dakota, and we recognize the importance of this resolution for the health and well being of our state's residents. As nutrition professionals, we educate individuals on the importance of consuming adequate vitamin D, recognizing that vitamin D needs vary throughout the lifecycle. Vitamin D deficiency is a recognized risk factor for several health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and mental health conditions. The scientific evidence clearly demonstrates that vitamin D plays a "pivotal role in maintaining bone and muscle health, immune function, and regulating multiple metabolic pathways." (1)

NDAND supports initiatives to increase awareness among the public and healthcare professionals about vitamin D and safe practices to prevent deficiency. Preventing vitamin D deficiency is a cost-effective approach that can significantly reduce the burden of disease and improve quality of life for North Dakotans.

We appreciate your consideration of HCR 3014.

Sincerely,
The North Dakota Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics

1. Copied from <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10254656/> 2/9/25.

2025 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

HCR 3014

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HCR 3014
3/11/2025

A concurrent resolution urging public health, health care systems, and health care providers to prioritize primary prevention in addressing vitamin D deficiency through multifaceted precision public health and medicine approaches.

4:09 p.m. Chairman Lee opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Lee, Vice-Chairman Weston, Senator Van Oosting, Senator Clemens, Senator Hogan, Senator Roers.

Discussion Topics:

- Related Health Conditions
- Impacted Population Groups
- Intake Strategies
- Medical Costs

4:09 p.m. Representative Karen Roer, District 31, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #40701.

4:15 p.m. Dr. Beth Sanford, Vitamin D Researcher, testified in favor.

4:47 p.m. Sherri L. Miller, Executive Director with North Dakota Nurses Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony #40255.

Additional written testimony:

Willis Reid, Consumer Healthcare Products Association, submitted written testimony in favor #39956.

4:49 p.m. Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk



Taking healthcare personally.

March 10, 2025

The Honorable Senator Judy Lee
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
State Capitol Building, Fort Lincoln Room
600 E. Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: HCR 3014 - urging public health, health care systems, and health care providers to prioritize primary prevention in addressing vitamin D deficiency.

Dear Chairwoman Lee,

On behalf of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), the Washington, D.C. based national trade organization representing the leading manufacturers of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, dietary supplements, and OTC medical devices, I'm writing to express support for House Concurrent Resolution 3014. This resolution would encourage health officials to prioritize primary prevention in addressing vitamin D deficiency through varied approaches.

Vitamin D, like many nutrients, has a profound impact on health, and in states like North Dakota, which have limited sunlight during most of the year, residents are often at increased risk of deficiency. This is especially concerning given the multitude of health issues that are associated with inadequate vitamin D levels, including risks of cardiovascular disease, autoimmune diseases, infectious diseases, and some common cancers.¹

Addressing this issue proactively through initiatives like public health education, sensible sun exposure, and use of dietary supplements including vitamin D is essential for improving the overall health of North Dakotans. Promoting these habits and recognizing the unique challenges posed by the state's geographic location could help to reduce future health disparities and ultimately lower healthcare costs for communities by focusing on preventative self-care. Moreover, a focus on self-care and the importance of vitamin D supplementation may contribute to a healthier, more productive population, supporting economic and social progress.

By investing and focusing on preventative measures now, North Dakota can reduce the long-term burden of chronic diseases that are associated with low vitamin D levels. I urge the Senate Human Services committee to support HCR 3014 and help the state lead the way in proactive, preventative healthcare measures.

Thank you for your consideration and feel free to contact me directly if I can provide additional perspective.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carlos P. Gutierrez', is written over a horizontal line.

¹ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18400738/>

Carlos I. Gutierrez
Vice President, State & Local Government Affairs
Consumer Healthcare Products Association
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cc: Senate Human Services Committee
The Honorable Senator Kent Weston, Vice Chair



✧ 1912-2025 ✧
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**Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Lee, Chair
Testimony in Support of HCR 3014
Tuesday, March 11, 2025**

Good morning, Chairman Lee, Vice Chairman Weston, and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee. My name is Sherri Miller, and I've been a registered nurse in North Dakota for 26 years. I am also the Executive Director of the North Dakota Nurses Association (NDNA).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HCR 3014**.

As the only professional organization representing all North Dakota nurses, NDNA is a leading voice for our state's nursing professionals. Our organization strongly supports this concurrent resolution, recognizing its focus on the vital connection between vitamin D and mental health, and the importance of this essential nutrient for overall well-being.

Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to various mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety. Nurses who are deficient in vitamin D may experience reduced cognitive function, mental clarity, and physical reaction time, potentially impacting their ability to respond quickly and strategically in critical situations. Research also suggests that low vitamin D may be a risk factor for psychiatric and neurocognitive disorders, with longitudinal studies demonstrating a link between low vitamin D and increased cognitive decline, depression, and dementia. Importantly, some studies have shown cognitive improvements, particularly in executive functions and information processing speed, after just four weeks of vitamin D supplementation. Overall, vitamin D supplementation may benefit nurses by improving cognitive function, mental and physical health, and sleep quality.

Vitamin D status can influence nurses' job performance, and it can also reduce risk of injury and contribute to fewer sick days. Just as NDNA is deeply invested in supporting the nursing workforce through recruitment and retention initiatives, we are committed to keeping our nurses healthy and able to provide care for the citizens of North Dakota. This is one way we can do that.

NDNA's mission is to advance the nursing profession by promoting nurses' professional development, fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting workplace safety and well-being, and advocating health care issues affecting nurses and the public. We believe HCR 3014 will not only improve the quality of life for North Dakotans, but also support our nurses in continuing their vital work caring for their patients.

We respectfully ask you to consider voting **YES** on HCR 3014. Thank you for the opportunity to present our support for this bill.

Sherri Miller, BS, BSN, RN
director@ndna.org
Executive Director
North Dakota Nurses Association

3/11/2025 - HCR 3014

Senate Human Services

~~Good Morning~~ ^{Afternoon} Chair Lee and Committee Members

For the record, my name is Representative Karen Rohr, and I represent District 31 which includes part of Morton County, all of Grant County and Sioux County and part of Hettinger County.

I stand before you today to introduce HCR 3014 on behalf of the ND Nurses Association. This concurrent resolution urges public health, health care systems, and health care providers to prioritize primary prevention in addressing vitamin D deficiency through multifaceted precision public health and medicine approaches that recognize both regional and individual determinants of health in diverse populations across the lifespan to improve patient outcomes, population health and decrease overall health care costs.

Why is addressing Vitamin D deficiency in North Dakota important?

As a Nurse Practitioner, I support primary prevention for Vitamin D deficiency in ND.

This is crucial for several reasons.

1. High Risk Due to Geography: ND has long winters with limited sunlight, which significantly impacts the body's ability to produce Vitamin D naturally. The lack of sunlight, especially in the colder months, makes residents more vulnerable to Vitamin D deficiency, which can affect their bone health, immune system, and overall well-being.
2. Health Benefits of Prevention: Primary prevention, such as promoting adequate Vitamin D intake through diet, supplementation, and safe sun exposure, helps prevent the onset of conditions related to deficiency. Vitamin D is vital for extra-renal tissues, prenatal health, brain function, immunity, pregnancy, cancer prevention, musculoskeletal health and cardiovascular health.
3. Improved Patient Outcomes: Vitamin D plays a crucial role in bone health by aiding calcium absorption. By supporting prevention, healthcare providers can reduce the risk of fractures, falls, and osteoporosis, especially in the older population. Furthermore, adequate Vitamin D levels are associated with better immune function, which is particularly important during flu season and for managing chronic illnesses.
4. Cost Effective Health Care: Preventing diseases related to Vitamin D Deficiency is cost effective. The cost of supplementation and education is far lower than the

costs associated with treating chronic diseases, or conditions like fractures, hospitalization, and long-term care due to osteoporotic fractures.

5. **Public Health Impact:** As a health care provider, supporting primary prevention can contribute to a larger public health initiative. By raising awareness and providing resources for vitamin D supplementation, you can reduce the population's overall health burden. This is particularly important in ND, where vitamin D deficiency is more prevalent due to environmental factors.
6. **Community Education:** By promoting the importance of vitamin D, health care providers can help educate the public on the significance of healthy habits like balanced nutrition, (including vitamin D rich foods like fortified milk, eggs, and fatty fish) and safe sun exposure. Educating individuals early on can have long-term positive effects on their health and quality of life.

In conclusion, supporting primary prevention of vitamin D deficiency in ND not only addresses a critical public health issue but also improves long-term health outcomes, reduces healthcare costs, and empowers individuals to take proactive steps toward better health.

Chair Lee and committee members, I also want to bring your attention to online testimony submitted in support of this resolution by Dr. Arnold & Dr. Obritsch, OB/GYN physicians, Dr. Andy McLean, Psychiatrist, Erin Berentson, ND Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, and Genevieve Hudgins, a Board Certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

I urge a Do Pass HCR 3014.

I stand for questions.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Human Services Committee Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

HCR 3014
3/12/2025

A concurrent resolution urging public health, health care systems, and health care providers to prioritize primary prevention in addressing vitamin D deficiency through multifaceted precision public health and medicine approaches.

2:10 p.m. Chairman Lee opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Lee, Vice-Chairman Weston, Senator Van Oosting, Senator Clemens, Senator Hogan, Senator Roers.

Discussion Topics:

- Grant Applications

2:11 p.m. Senator Van Oosting moved Do Pass.

2:11 p.m. Senator Roers seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Desiree Van Oosting	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator Van Oosting will carry the bill.

2:12 p.m. Chairman Lee closed the hearing.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HCR 3014 ([25.3030.01000](#))

Human Services Committee (Sen. Lee, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3014 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This resolution does not affect workforce development.