

Testimony
House Bill No. 1035
House Human Services Committee
Representative Weisz, Chairman
January 4, 2023

Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Krista Fremming, Interim Director of Medical Services with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department).

Reforming the Medicaid developmental disabilities and children's waivers is no small task and should be thought of as a marathon, not a sprint. Full implementation will take several years to achieve. The Department believes a cross-disability advisory council as it is proposed in House Bill 1035 can work effectively with the Department and subject matter expert consultants to plan and design for a system that can continue to meet the needs of people with disabilities in North Dakota.

Section 4 of the bill is the appropriation and authorization of full-time equivalent positions to support the effort. The Department provided a recommendation to the interim Human Services committee to address the resources needed to move the waiver reforms forward in a timely manner. House Bill 1035 reduced the Department's recommendation made to the interim committee by half.

The Department believes that additional resources are needed to move this work at the pace desired by the broader stakeholder community and the legislature. If the resources remain at the levels proposed in House

Bill 1035, we will likely need to adjust the proposed implementation by adopting a phased approach, with the children's cross-disability waiver being addressed first and the developmental disabilities level of care redesign sequenced to occur later. It is the Department's opinion that it is important to have the cross-disability waiver in place first because this can help assure that those who may be affected by any level of care changes in the developmental disabilities waiver will not be left without service during a transition period.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.