

TESTIMONY
Senate Bill 2012 – DHS/ DD
House Appropriations – Human Resources Division - LTC Continuum
Representative Pollert, Chairman
March 8, 2011

Chairman Pollert, members of the House Appropriations Committee – Human Resources Division, I am Barbara Murry, Executive Director of the North Dakota Association of Community Providers. I am here today to give brief testimony on the developmental disabilities section of the long term care continuum in SB 2012

The North Dakota Association of Community Providers is made up of 29 organizations across the state. We represent approximately 4,500 staff, 3,900 of whom are Direct Support Professionals, or DSP's. We serve approximately 4,500 individuals with developmental disabilities. Services are most often, lifelong. Ninety-nine percent of the typical provider funding comes through the Department of Human Services.

We are requesting your support in a number of areas of our platform, which I have attached. I will address the wages, turnover, and set aside. Sandi Marshall will discuss critical needs and transition. Jon Larson will testify on benefits. Catholic Charities will discuss the guardianship needs which are under the DD Division operational budget. We have introduced you to some of our staff and the people we support in previous years, and are not repeating that testimony today. I have included a card with a description of a young woman who was earlier served at the Anne Carlsen Center, and is currently served by Enable to give you information on our services.

Wage Increases. We are requesting your support for the Governor's budget, which includes an increase of 3% each year of the biennium. We are also requesting support for the \$.50 per hour increase to the budget made by the Senate. Our original request was for a \$1.46 per hour market adjustment for all staff in the organizations, which is the differential found in our October wage survey. With the support of the 2009 Legislature, developmental disabilities staff received a 6% increase each year of the biennium, along with a \$1.00 per hour increase the first year. This increase, along with strategies put in place by NDACP members, had a profound impact on our turnover, reducing it from 43% to 33%, as of 7-1-10, and we are very appreciative of this increase. While this has stabilized services, it is still a very high turnover rate, and we hope it can be reduced further with your support. I have attached a study of our turnover, "Recruitment and Retention of Direct Support Professionals in ND," completed by the CMS DSW Resource Center Technical Assistance Team out of the U of MN, for your review. I have also attached a graph of our turnover, since 2001, indicating the impact of raises given by the legislature. This report highlights several additional areas that are significant in reduction of turnover. Strategies include improving the capacity of supervisors to know and use effective supervision practices, improving hiring practices by implementing interventions to reduce unrealistic expectations for newly hired staff, and improving the status and image of the direct support profession.

We have been working hard since the last legislative assembly to implement strategies to impact our turnover. We partnered with the Department of Commerce and served as the beta organization to implement a Talent Pipeline Map, as a part of

the Governor's strategies to impact the labor force needs in ND. The strategies selected in this pipeline map match those recommended in current research. We have increased the training for our frontline supervisors, with a training curriculum of approximately 40 hours, as research indicates competent supervisors are a critical factor in reducing turnover. Ninety staff were trained with that curriculum. In a partnership developed through the DHS Money Follows the Person grant, we are in the process of developing a Realistic Job Preview video, which will help us hire those staff who understand the work in the job for which they are applying. Our improved data collection indicates our highest turnover occurs in the first year and this strategy should impact that initial turnover. We are also working with the Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State. They have long had a high quality module curriculum, with a career ladder which leads to a certificate, an associate's degree, and a bachelor's degree. They are exploring an accreditation process which will give a nationally recognized certification to ND's DSPs. We have also begun to work with the Labor Department to explore an apprenticeship program with a national credential.

Additionally, almost half of NDACP members provide agency QSP services. NDACP supports the same increases for QSPs, as well as support increased funding for travel.

Chairman Pollert, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.