

June 3, 2014

The honorable Mark Sanford
675 Vineyard Drive
Grand Forks, N.D. 58201-2904

RE: Sanford-NDSU nursing college partnership

Dear Rep. Sanford and members of the Higher Education Funding Interim Committee:

Access to healthcare in western North Dakota needs your support. Families living in and near oil-producing communities must wait weeks for an appointment and must travel great distances to seek urgent care and specialty care. With your help, Sanford Health is working to bring much-needed resources and solutions to this region. Recent advances include opening a new, larger clinic in Dickinson, introducing Mobile Med—clinics on wheels—to the Bakken, and bringing Air Med to central and western North Dakota. Each of these services improves access to care in areas where it is desperately needed.

A growing crisis for North Dakota's healthcare system is its workforce: Sanford Health and other healthcare organizations are working diligently to recruit and retain a sustainable workforce, but we're falling short. Demand exceeds supply and there is great urgency to expand medical education opportunities within the state.

To grow the nursing workforce in western North Dakota we need your leadership to establish a bigger, stronger registered nurse program in Bismarck. While Sanford Health College of Nursing has a strong history of producing high-quality, expertly trained nurses, we are not in the education business. By partnering with North Dakota State University—one of the most successful and well-respected nursing education leaders in the region—Sanford's nursing college solidifies a long-term, sustainable source for high-quality nursing graduates in central and western North Dakota. Additionally, the relationship creates opportunities to establish post-graduate programs including pharmacy and advanced practice provider training to further help address the staffing shortages in western North Dakota. Sanford Health in Bismarck already has a long-standing partnership with Bismarck State College for its nursing program as well as other health tech-related medical fields.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to supporting healthcare education opportunities in western North Dakota. Expanding healthcare education via sustainable partnerships will benefit all North Dakotans by providing improved access to affordable care.

Please contact me if you have questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Lambrecht", with a small "ML" or similar mark at the end.

Dr. Craig Lambrecht, President