

**Testimony**  
**Health Services Committee**  
**Wednesday, November 4, 2015**  
**North Dakota Department of Health**

Good afternoon Chairman Lee and members of the Health Services Committee. My name is Brenda Weisz, representing the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) as Director of the Accounting Division. I am here today to provide an update on the status of the department's study of health professional assistance programs.

During the 2015 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed HB1036, which required the Department of Health to evaluate the state programs to assist health professionals, including behavioral health professionals, with a focus on state loan repayment programs. Other legislation added behavioral health professionals and psychologists to the state loan repayment program administered by the NDDoH. New applications for these two disciplines have been developed. The Health Council will receive applications for these two new areas in April 2016 and funding will be awarded for year 2 of the current biennium and in future biennia.

Regarding the study, the work will be completed by an employee of the department who is independent of the Primary Care Office, which administers the loan repayment program. The Department is developing the methodology and approach to conduct the study, which will include the following:

- Identifying the state programs that assist health professionals;
- Considering whether elements of the state programs could be standardized;
- Evaluating funding and usage of the state programs;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the programs; and
- Considering whether there are gaps or duplication in the programs.

The work on the study will pick up momentum in the coming months and additional information will be available after the Health Council meets in the spring of 2016.

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