

**Vision**

The North Dakota Hospital Association will take an active leadership role in major Healthcare issues.

Mission

The North Dakota Hospital Association exists to advance the health status of persons served by the membership.

**North Dakota Legislative Management
Health Services Committee
January 7, 2016**

Good morning Chairman Lee and members of the Health Services Committee. I am Jerry E. Jurena, President of the North Dakota Hospital Association. I am here today to provide an update on dental services provided by hospitals within the state.

NDHA sent a survey to our member hospitals asking about dental services provided in emergency rooms. We asked are patients presenting for dental services only and if so could these same services be provided by the local dentist. We heard back from approximately half of the members. I would like to share our findings from the survey.

Based on the feedback, most patients that access emergency rooms for dental care present with toothaches, abscesses, or other tooth issues. Most of these services could have been provided by a dentist. The common reasons patients show up in the ER are:

- Dental office hours not available after 5 pm and no weekend hours
- Dentists not enrolled in ND Medicaid
- Narcotics – drug seekers

The survey indicated most of the patients seen in emergency rooms were either uninsured or ND Medicaid; we don't have breakouts between the two groups.

Also, the survey results indicated that patients seeking dental services in emergency rooms is more of an issue with the urban hospitals. Some rural providers indicated having great dental providers in their community, therefore not an issue.

The uninsured and Medicaid patients are presenting at hospitals for dental services. The question remains how do we increase access so these services are provided in the correct setting. If the state is covering these services in the ERs, it is costing more than if done in a dental office.

I would be glad to answer any questions regarding this issue.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J E Jurena". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops for the letters "J" and "E".

Jerry E. Jurena, President
North Dakota Hospital Association