

MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

1053

2007 HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES

HB 1053

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1053

House Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: January 9, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 785

Committee Clerk Signature

Judy Schock

Minutes:

Rep. Price: I will open hearing on HB 1053.

Vanessa Handte: (Current chair of ND Board of Addiction Counseling)

Testimony Attached.

Rep. Conrad: Which parts do you think will encourage more people to become addiction counselors and to get licensed.

Vanessa Handte: The areas of this specifically will address that had to do with the cleanup of this bill. It removes some of the language and comes up with a sort of administrative code.

Rep. Hofstad: Can you tell me that on section 1, are you taking out the time requirement for the training?

Vanessa Handte: No we are not taking that out completely, but we felt that it is best to be defined more clearly in its administrative code. In administrative code I can tell you that we are looking at some changes to that presently. I have experience in advertising for positions. We do have many applicants from out of state that have applied to come to ND. Presently we require nine months or 1,400 hours of training. No other state has that kind of hours. We are going to try and reduce the number of hours to keep more in line with other states. We are also considering change for other disciplines that are looking at becoming licensed. For example,

we have two licensed social workers that have been practicing therapists for a number of years. They recently had to complete another 1,400 hours of training specific to their addiction. Rep. Porter: Is there a provision inside of the Practices Act that discusses continuing education for licensed addiction counselors?

Vanessa Handte: Yes there is. Presently the continuing education requirements discussed in the ND Administrative Code are 60 continuing education hours required every three years.

Rep. Kaldor: What is the pay level on average for an addiction counselor?

Vanessa Handte: It is very similar as other human service professions. Pay is always an issue and is something to address.

Rep. Price: What do the other states require for their clinical hours?

Vanessa Handte: It really varies by each state. Some require a 3 month. The most that has come to my attention has been 900.

Rep. Conrad: When was this bill initially passed?

Vanessa Handte: The initial bill was passed in 1987. The most recent change was in 2003.

Kurt Snyderam here to provide favor of testimony to HB 1053.

Rep. Price: Have you seen a struggle with addiction counselors since then?

Kurt Snyder: We have not struggled with that issue.

Rep. Price: Any testimony in favor? Is there any opposition testimony? I will close hearing on HB 1053.

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. HB 1053

House Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: 01-09-2007

Recorder Job Number: 787

Committee Clerk Signature

Judy Schrock

Minutes:

Chairman Price: Open up HB 1053. Committee what are your concerns about the bill?

Representative Ugem: This sort of parallels to the nurse's controversy we have had in the past, where we were considering allowing them to reduce education requirements. If we are going to work with the rest of the US, we may need to do that.

Representative Porter: I move a due pass. **Representative Hatlestad** seconds the motion.

The vote was 12 yeas 0 nays and 0 absent.

FISCAL NOTE
 Requested by Legislative Council
 01/04/2007

REVISION

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 1053

1A. State fiscal effect: *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	2005-2007 Biennium		2007-2009 Biennium		2009-2011 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues		\$0		(\$4,000)		(\$4,000)
Expenditures		\$0		(\$4,000)		(\$4,000)
Appropriations						

1B. County, city, and school district fiscal effect: *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

2005-2007 Biennium			2007-2009 Biennium			2009-2011 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts

2A. Bill and fiscal impact summary: *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

HB 1053 reduces the size of the board from 9 to 7 starting Jan, 2008. It changes the licensing period from every year to every 2.

It also deals with clearing up some confusion and more clearly identifies the duties and responsibilities of the board.

B. Fiscal impact sections: *Identify and provide a brief description of the sections of the measure which have fiscal impact. Include any assumptions and comments relevant to the analysis.*

Section 2 of the bill reduces the board size from 9 to 7 members. This could generate a slight savings to the board depending on the location of the board members.

Section 9 of the bill moves the licensee from an annual renewal to a biennial renewal. In the short term, this will reduce the cost of printing and postage. The amount again may not be significant given the total number of licensees.

3. State fiscal effect detail: *For information shown under state fiscal effect in 1A, please:*

A. Revenues: *Explain the revenue amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each revenue type and fund affected and any amounts included in the executive budget.*

The revenue comes from new licensee applications and renewals of current licensees. Since the board is self-sustaining, there were no dollars included in the executive budget.

B. Expenditures: *Explain the expenditure amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency, line item, and fund affected and the number of FTE positions affected.*

The expenditures are expected to remain constant or initially show a slight reduction because of reduced printing and postage costs.

C. Appropriations: *Explain the appropriation amounts. Provide detail, when appropriate, for each agency and fund affected. Explain the relationship between the amounts shown for expenditures and appropriations. Indicate whether the appropriation is also included in the executive budget or relates to a continuing appropriation.*

The Addiction board operates on its own revenues – fees collected from new and renewed licenses. There is no money in the executive budget for this board.

Name: Tom Tupa	Agency: North Dakota Board of Addiction Counselor Examiners
Phone Number: 701-255-1439	Date Prepared: 12/29/2006

FISCAL NOTE

Requested by Legislative Council

12/26/2006

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 1053

1A. State fiscal effect: *Identify the state fiscal effect and the fiscal effect on agency appropriations compared to funding levels and appropriations anticipated under current law.*

	2005-2007 Biennium		2007-2009 Biennium		2009-2011 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues		\$87,575		\$82,875		\$82,875
Expenditures		\$87,575		\$82,875		\$82,875
Appropriations						

1B. County, city, and school district fiscal effect: *Identify the fiscal effect on the appropriate political subdivision.*

2005-2007 Biennium			2007-2009 Biennium			2009-2011 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts

2A. Bill and fiscal impact summary: *Provide a brief summary of the measure, including description of the provisions having fiscal impact (limited to 300 characters).*

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Name: Tom Tupa	Agency: North Dakota Board of Addiction Counselor Examiners
Phone Number: 701-255-1439	Date Prepared: 12/29/2006

Date: 4/9/07
Roll Call Vote #: ~~88~~

2007 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. "Click here to type Bill/Resolution No."

House HUMAN SERVICES HB 1053 Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken No Pass

Motion Made By Rep Porter Seconded By Rep Hatlestad

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Clara Sue Price - Chairman	✓		Kari L Conrad	✓	
Vonnie Pietsch - Vice Chairman	✓		Lee Kaldor	✓	
Chuck Damschen	✓		Louise Potter	✓	
Patrick R. Hatlestad	✓		Jasper Schneider	✓	
Curt Hofstad	✓				
Todd Porter	✓				
Gerry Uglem	✓				
Robin Weisz	✓				

Total (Yes) "Click here to type Yes Vote" No "Click here to type No Vote"

Absent ~~1~~ 0

Floor Assignment Rep Conrad

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
January 9, 2007 3:37 p.m.

Module No: HR-05-0383
Carrier: Conrad
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1053: Human Services Committee (Rep. Price, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1053 was placed on the
Eleventh order on the calendar.

2007 SENATE HUMAN SERVICES

HB 1053

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 1053

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 21, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 3582

Committee Clerk Signature

Mary K Monson

Minutes:

Sen. Judy Lee opened the hearing on HB 1053, a bill relating to the licensure of addiction counselors. All members (6) were present.

Tom Tupa, speaking on behalf of the ND Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners, testified in favor of the bill. See attached testimony #1.

Sen. Judy Lee- are there any significant changes to the requirements of an addiction counselor that are changing?

Tom Tupa- there are no significant changes in the terms of the requirements there may be a slight change here or there.

Sen. Erbele- how many units do you need now on an annual basis and where can they get them?

Tom Tupa- at the present time it is 60 hours of continuing education every 3 years, so it comes out to 10 hours a year. They can pick those up at a variety of places often times there are agencies who put on programs, DHS is a big provider.

Sen. Warner- can you go through the process a little bit on back ground checks?

Tom Tupa- right now there is the attorney generals bill that deals with criminal background checks for a number of professions, addiction is not one of them at this time. There was a

discussion about it at the board meetings however it was determined that because of how they are conducted the board wanted a little more time. My suspicion is that you will see in the next session a criminal background check changed in the statute of addiction counselors however in the mean time many employers today are requiring criminal background checks before people are employed within their profession.

Sen. Warner- is a criminal background or a conviction an impediment to licensure within the board of rules or whatever its current system?

Tom Tupa- not necessarily it could be a question at the time of licensure however if it is something that has happened in the past, say 10 years ago and there have been no reoccurring incidences the board would probably view that as somebody who has on the path to recovery and doing a good job. However, the board does monitor those cases and if people relapse in the profession the board comes and they could on occasion be put on a watch list and they have to report periodically to the board to make sure that they are still on track and they haven't faltered again along the way.

Sen. Dever- I am not quite clear on how this bill is going to increase the number of licensees?

Tom Tupa- right now not all states require an oral exam, ND at this point does require that. Montana had one up until 2 years ago and have since dropped it. That seems to be somewhat of a deterrent for licensed applicants. People will sometimes go to other states and take it where there are no oral exams. It is not a guarantee that there is going to be more licensed addiction counselors in ND one of the big issues is the salary. Other states seem to pay a little more however we do have a big variation in salaries in ND depending on where you are working, geography, agency, state vs. private and those sorts of things, so there are other factors in dealing with that.

Sen. Dever- I am just curious if the treatment in addiction in any way involves the practice of acupuncture?

Tom Tupa- not to my knowledge.

Sen. Judy Lee- I had been told in the past years that the standards and requirements for addiction counselors is among the highest in the country and that it could be part of the reason why we struggle a bit to get them in here?

Tom Tupa- that is true, that is why the board and the coalition sub-committee has said that they would like to move some things over to the rules other than the state law and perhaps make some adjustments in there that would alleviate some of the competitive requirements across state lines.

Sen. Judy Lee- do you have a compact at all for a reciprocity of the state?

Tom Tupa- no we don't.

Sen. Judy Lee- I suppose with the variations from state to state that is not going to work?

Tom Tupa- it is tough.

Kurt Snyder, Chair of the ND Addiction Treatment Providers Coalition, testified in favor of the bill. See attached testimony #2.

Sen. Judy Lee- have you taken both the written and the oral test?

Kurt Snyder- I did.

Sen. Judy Lee- is it just an intimidation factor for the oral test, why would this be such a struggle for people to have the written and the oral?

Kurt Snyder- it is a very objective test, there are 3 examiners. It is a process that can only be done twice a year so sometimes people have to wait quite a while to do it and if they fail it takes them a long time to test again. It is a process that is not done in most of the other states. The written test is a researched uncompromised test that is very subjective.

Sen. Erbele- give me an example of an oral question?

Kurt Synder- there are 65 questions and they are based on the 8 skill groups that we see as our skill sets for addiction counseling, so one of them might be regards to legal or ethical and it may say name the different exceptions for confidentiality or it could say give examples of the different laws or statues that govern the conduct of a ND addiction counselor or it may have to do with treatment planning or the assessment. It is a 50 minute process.

Sen. Dever- I know of a group of people that went to LA with the addiction counseling, how are we at keeping up to date with the technology and ways that they deal with addiction counseling?

Kurt Synder- I have gone through different training we are not hearing of new things in ND but we are on the cutting edge currently we are ahead of most states.

Sen. Heckaman- so if this passes and the board is better able to look at that do you expect that to drop down then?

Kurt Synder- yes, there will need to be some changes to more adequately reflect the nation and the requirements across the nation.

Sen. Judy Lee- how many addiction counselors are there currently in the state of ND?

Kurt Synder- around 325.

Sen. Dever- I remember before that Heartview had gone to non-residential treatment, was that a mistake do you have residential treatment now?

Kurt Synder- currently we do not but we are in the process of providing it again. I believe there is a center part that we need to move towards, outpatient treatment can be very cost effective and very effective in helping people reestablish their lives. However there is a need for a certain percentage of the population that need to be served in a residential capacity.

Sen. Heckaman- what do you see for the future of treating those addicted under the age of 18?

Kurt Synder- there are some statistics that are scary to the state of ND, we lead the nation in binge drinking and most of that is done with the younger people. I don't think that we are seeing a huge request for those 18 and under requesting services but there is definitely some things in the state and with the culture of alcohol in our state.

Sen. Heckaman- so are there some things in this bill assist in providing service for those young teens or young adults?

Kurt Synder- our challenge as professionals in the state is that we are trying to serve a large population with very few people, I think that this bill will in an indirect way help us to meet our challenges as a state.

Sen. Erbele- what is the ratio of the staff in counseling verse the need out there?

Kurt Synder- I am not sure, something else that is not being talked about is that our population of addiction counselors from across the state and across the nation are elderly and are ready for retirement. So we are seeing a large group of counselors retiring too, we can't keep up with the growth.

Sen. Judy Lee- would it also be true that there is a pull between the higher compensation that is available for an addiction counselor and a private facility?

Kurt Synder- we pay a higher salary at our organization however we can't come close to matching the benefits of the state system.

Sen. Judy Lee- what would be a typical case load?

Kurt Synder- 20-40 but at places like Heartview it is more of 10-15 so we can work on a more individual basis. And to refer to Sen. Dever's question we do use acupuncture for withdrawal symptoms.

Vanessa Handte also submitted testimony in favor of the bill, see attachment #3.

No opposition to the bill.

No neutral position on the bill.

Sen. Judy Lee closed the hearing.

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Bill/Resolution No. 1053

Senate Human Services Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Hearing Date: February 21, 2007

Recorder Job Number: 3595

Committee Clerk Signature

Mary K Monson

Minutes:

Sen. Judy Lee opened discussion on HB 1053.

Sen. Warner- I guess I wanted to know if the committee had any thoughts on background checks.

Sen. Dever- on the bill that was passed on background checks it included pretty much everybody.

Sen. Heckaman- he said that addiction counselors were not in that one.

Sen. Judy Lee- I remember him saying that they didn't put it in here but he also referred to another bill.

Sen. Dever- but that bill when I looked at it had some very broad things in it and seemed to repeat some of the more specific terms.

Sen. Judy Lee- We didn't hear that bill.

Sen. Heckaman- one of the questions that you asked was the system that changed education requirements and they said no and then when I asked about dropping the number of hours down it this bill passed he said it would.

Sen. Judy Lee- the bill doesn't call for it to be reduced but by putting the board in charge it could. And one of the things that I was referring to earlier was that Susan Stenjhem Brown

passed away and was really involved in writing this in the first place and was an addiction counselor, there were clients of hers that showed up at the funeral home and I thought it was great that they would come and tell how much she meant to them in their lives. She was very involved with drafting the original legislation from what I have been told and was real hard nosed about making sure that we had strong criteria in play and I think that is important, but it has evolved over a period of time now.

Sen. Heckaman- at our human service area we are always short on staffing. It is an area of need and I wouldn't be opposed to dropping the number of hours down.

Sen. Erbele- when we are talking in section 9 where it says that the biggest change went from a one year license period to a 2 year period but then they also said that the continuing education unit had to be so many every three years, why would you have your continuing education tied to your licensure?

Sen. Judy Lee- I agree that that's true except in my real life I renew my real estate license every year but the continuing requirements are a cycle, I can't do all 16 in the same year.

Sen. Erbele- but you could not take anything one year if you were confident that you would get it done?

Sen. Judy Lee- no it is set up what I have to do year to year.

Sen. Erbele- is that the way this is?

Sen. Judy Lee- I don't know. I think that the vary professional boards that we have are as far as I know done a good job of maintaining their standards of the professions, the people that are serving on those boards are people that care about what is going on and they are current on what the requirements are for each. So whatever the committee wants to go ahead with on this we will move forward.

Sen. Judy Lee closed the discussion.

Sen. Erbele motioned for a Do Pass and was seconded by **Sen. Dever**. Roll call vote 6-0-0.

Sen. Dever was designated to carry the bill to the floor.

Date: 2-21-07
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2007 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1053

Senate HUMAN SERVICES Committee

Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Sen. Erbele Seconded By Sen. Hever

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Judy Lee, Chairman	✓		Senator Joan Heckaman	✓	
Senator Robert Erbele, V. Chair	✓		Senator Jim Pomeroy	✓	
Senator Dick Dever	✓		Senator John M. Warner	✓	

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Hever

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

HB 1053: Human Services Committee (Sen. J. Lee, Chairman) recommends DO PASS
(6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1053 was placed on the
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2007 TESTIMONY

HB 1053

Chair Price and members of the committee, my name is Vanessa Handte and I am the current chair of the North Dakota Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners. I am here today to provide testimony on HB 1053 regarding proposed changes to North Dakota Century Code Chapter 43-45 for addiction counselors. The purpose of the suggested changes to this Chapter is two-fold: 1. housekeeping, and 2. to address the current shortage of licensed professionals in the state.

It was necessary to provide some clean-up of the language in Chapter 43-45. Overall, the focus of the changes to Century Code was to streamline and remove text that appeared more appropriate for Administrative rather than Century Code. Additionally, board members noted that there was inconsistency in terminology between what was in Century Code and Administrative Code. Therefore, attempts were made to provide this correction. In reviewing and updating Century Code, codes of other similar disciplines such as social work and professional counselors were reviewed to assure that similar terminology and concepts were addressed.

The more important issue prompting the need to update this chapter of Century Code is the present shortage of addiction counselors in the state. According to the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health, North Dakota continues to have one of the highest unmet needs for treatment, confirming the need for more services. However, despite the need for more services, many agencies in the state have struggled to fill even existing positions that are available. At the time of preparing this testimony, four of the eight regional human service centers had openings posted for licensed addiction counselors. Additionally, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has an opening posted. All of these openings are listed as "open until filled". It should be noted that seven of the eight human service centers and the North Dakota State Hospital have had openings posted in the past six months. In talking with supervisors at

these agencies, they report that they have had positions posted with no qualified applicants. I work in a private setting, and have had similar response when positions have been posted. Additionally, I have attempted advertising in neighboring states as well as internet postings through CareerBuilder.com. This has resulted in applicants. However, unfortunately, few were determined qualified due requirements in other states not being "substantially the same" as required in North Dakota.

In the past year, guests from the ND Department of Human Services, ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the private sector have come to meetings of the ND Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners to ask the board to consider changes looking specifically at making it easier for persons to become licensed as addiction counselors and enter the field. The board responded by appointing a sub-committee with representatives from the ND Department of Human Services, ND Treatment Providers Coalition, ND Addiction Counselor's Association, ND Council of Training Consortiums, and both the public and private sector. This committee met and determined that there were several areas of concern which were a priority to be addressed. These included: licensure requirements (specifically regarding education and hours required for training), reciprocity, examinations, fees, and private practice. Notice was posted on the board's website requesting individuals to submit any written comment and feedback regarding changes in these areas. From this, the committee met several more times to draft the suggested changes to ND Century Code Chapter 43-45.

All parties named above and involved in this committee were in support of the proposed changes. I therefore, request that this committee consider a unanimous "do pass" in support of HB 1053.

Dear Madam Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Kurt Snyder and I am the Chair of the North Dakota Addiction Treatment Providers Coalition. I am also the Regional Director of the North Dakota Addiction Counselors Association in the Bismarck area. I am here today as a representative of both entities to provide testimony in favor of House Bill 1053. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Kurt Snyder, Executive Director

Heartview Foundation

101 E Broadway Ave

Bismarck, ND 58501

701-222-0386

heartview@midconetwork.com

1/9/07

TESTIMONY ON HB 1053
HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
1-9-07

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Tom Tupa and I am speaking on behalf of the ND Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners. I am here to ask for a "do pass" Committee recommendation on HB 1053.

The initial licensure law was passed in 1987 with some changes to the law and the rules and regulations since that time.

HB 1053 was introduced by the Board with the idea of making additional changes that will, in the end, help alleviate the Addiction Counselor shortage in ND.

I would like to walk the Committee through the bill section by section. Following me the Board Chair will provide some additional testimony on the Bill.

Thank you for your time and I will try to answer any questions the committee may have.

TESTIMONY ON HB 1053
HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
2-21-07

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, my name is Tom Tupa and I am speaking on behalf of the ND Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners. I am here to ask for a "do pass" Committee recommendation on HB 1053.

The initial licensure law was passed in 1987 with some changes to the law and the rules and regulations since that time.

Currently there is a shortage of addiction counselors in most areas across the State. With your "do pass" blessing on this bill, and the hopeful signature of the Governor, the board will then proceed to revise the rules and regulations for the profession with the final result being more counselors to provide services to the population of the State. Once the entire process is complete, the profession should see increases in the number of licensees without diminishing consumer protection or the professionalism of the licensees.

HB 1053 is the product of a board created sub - committee and many hours of work by board members, individual addiction counselors, various agencies, DHS and others. As you will see some of the changes clarify language while other parts deal with changes to help reduce the shortage of licensed addiction counselors in the State. All parties who worked on HB 1053 were in support of the proposed changes.

I would like to walk the Committee through the bill section by section.

Section 1 changes some of the language in the definition portion of the law. The changes eliminate some of the confusion around the words "Clinical Training", "Internship", and "Private Practice".

Section 2 changes the board size from a 9 to 7 members.

Section 3 deletes old language.

Section 4 takes the powers and duties of the board out of paragraph form and lists them separately.

Section 5 just changes a few words but not the meaning in the law.

Section 6 deletes the words "one year" on line 17 and makes some grammatical changes to help license counselors via reciprocity.

Section 7 allows the board to set the private practice criteria by rule rather than in statute.

Section 8 clarifies the exemptions for the profession.

Section 9 creates the biggest change in the law. It allows the board to go from a one year license period to a two year period. It cleans up the process with deadlines and late fees as well as CE requirements.

Section 10 clears up some language dealing with complaints against the licensees.

Lastly, section 11 sets the effective date of the law to January 1, 2008 to coincide with the new 2 year licensing period.

I ask the committee give the bill a unanimous "do pass". Thank you for your time and I will try to answer any questions the committee may have.

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2/21/07

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The more important issue prompting the need to update this chapter of Century Code is the present shortage of addiction counselors in the state. According to the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health, North Dakota continues to have one of the highest unmet needs for treatment, confirming the need for more services. However, despite the need for more services, many agencies in the state have struggled to fill even existing positions that are available. At the time of preparing this testimony, four of the eight regional human service centers had openings posted for licensed addiction counselors. Additionally, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has an opening posted. All of these openings are listed as "open until filled". It should be noted that seven of the eight human service centers and the North Dakota State Hospital have had openings posted in the past six months. In talking with supervisors at

these agencies, they report that they have had positions posted with no qualified applicants. I work in a private setting, and have had similar response when positions have been posted. Additionally, I have attempted advertising in neighboring states as well as internet postings through CareerBuilder.com. This has resulted in applicants. However, unfortunately, few were determined qualified due requirements in other states not being "substantially the same" as required in North Dakota.

In the past year, guests from the ND Department of Human Services, ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the private sector have come to meetings of the ND Board of Addiction Counseling Examiners to ask the board to consider changes looking specifically at making it easier for persons to become licensed as addiction counselors and enter the field. The board responded by appointing a sub-committee with representatives from the ND Department of Human Services, ND Treatment Providers Coalition, ND Addiction Counselor's Association, ND Council of Training Consortiums, and both the public and private sector. This committee met and determined that there were several areas of concern which were a priority to be addressed. These included: licensure requirements (specifically regarding education and hours required for training), reciprocity, examinations, fees, and private practice. Notice was posted on the board's website requesting individuals to submit any written comment and feedback regarding changes in these areas. From this, the committee met several more times to draft the suggested changes to ND Century Code Chapter 43-45.

All parties named above and involved in this committee were in support of the proposed changes. I therefore, request that this committee consider a unanimous "do pass" in support of HB 1053.