

Good Morning, Chairwoman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee. My name is Kirby Kruger and I am the Director of the Division of Disease Control for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2170.

The proposed revisions to this statute would allow for physicians who are licensed by the board of medicine to oversee and be responsible for CLIA waived testing performed by otherwise exempted persons.

As the agency who administers the HIV and hepatitis C rapid testing program in North Dakota, the North Dakota Department of Health feels that these changes will increase and enhance the availability of testing for HIV and hepatitis C to at-risk individuals.

Under current law, lay individuals performing testing, like our Field Epidemiologists, are required to be overseen and trained by a clinical laboratory director who is licensed by the Clinical Laboratory Board. Many local public health units, some small clinics or other organizations that provide services to people at-risk for HIV or hepatitis C may not have access to a laboratory director or to a person otherwise exempt from supervision and thus could be limited in the services they provide.

An example of a public health program that would benefit from this proposed change is syringe service programs. Providing rapid hepatitis C and HIV testing within the syringe service program is essential and necessary to retain high risk people who may need to be referred elsewhere for such testing.

A second example is paramedics being able to perform rapid testing without oversight from a laboratory director. Most services have a Medical Director who could oversee the testing. Right now, paramedics who otherwise perform complex invasive medical procedures, are unable to perform low-complexity waived tests.

This concludes my testimony and I urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 2170. Thank you and I would be happy to take questions.