

Good afternoon Chairman Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is Dr. Tracy Miller and I am the State Epidemiologist for North Dakota. I am here to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2196.

This bill proposes to create a drug fatality review panel. As you can see in the table below, our number of drug related deaths remain small in comparison to other states. However, as can be seen in the last column, 39 to 73 percent of deaths each year are due to opioids and other narcotics. This means that many of these deaths could be prevented.

Year	All Drug Related Deaths	Narcotic Related Deaths	Percent of Drug Related Deaths
2011	41	22	54%
2012	49	27	55%
2013	48	26	54%
2014	37	27	73%
2015	54	21	39%
2016	68	48	71%
2017	76	34	45%

Source: North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Vital Records.

Over the past year myself, along with others from the Department of Health, Board of Pharmacy, UND Forensic Pathology Department, and Department of Human Services began work on developing an overdose death review panel. The goal was to look at these deaths to find missed opportunities, gaps in our system and other areas of improvement so we could prevent suicides and accidental overdoses. However, concerns about legal authority and confidentiality arose and the project was put on hold.

This bill will allow us to implement this needed review panel, so I support a do pass on SB 2196. This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.