

Testimony
Senate Bill 2023
House Appropriations Committee
March 16, 2015; 2:45 p.m.
North Dakota Department of Health

Good afternoon, Chairman Delzer and members of the House Appropriations Committee. My name is Molly Howell, and I am the Immunization Program Manager for the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2023.

The Department of Health is requesting a deficiency appropriation of \$470,900 for the Immunization Program in order to continue to supply vaccines for insured children who receive vaccinations at local public health units (LPHU), in accordance with North Dakota Century Code 23-01-39. Children who are uninsured, underinsured, American Indian, or Medicaid-eligible receive vaccines purchased through the federal Vaccines for Children Program.

The Department of Health's budget for the 2013 – 2015 biennium included \$2.5 million for vaccines provided at LPHUs. The department experienced a deficiency in funding because more children than anticipated actually received vaccines, vaccine costs have increased, and a new vaccine, which was not accounted for in the prior budget, will become available in April 2015. More children than estimated received influenza, meningitis, and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines and a new HPV vaccine that covers nine types instead of four types of HPV will be available in April 2015.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently changed the requirements on ordering and replenishing vaccines, requiring the department to purchase the July 2015 supply of vaccines before June 30, 2015.

For the 2015 – 2017 biennium, the Department of Health's recommended budget includes \$3.08 million for vaccines provided at LPHUs. This includes an increase of \$576,853 for the reasons explained above, along with five percent inflation per year to account for vaccine price increases and increased demand for vaccines. The Department of Health's budget passed the House with this increase in funding for vaccines.

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