

Testimony
Human Services Committee
House Bill 1035
Wednesday, March 8, 2017
North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning, Madam Chairman and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Bobbie Will, and I am the Primary Care Office Manager at the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here to provide information on HB 1035 relating to release from contract obligation for the dental loan repayment program.

In April 2016, the State Health Council approved eight applications based on the availability of funds. However, since issuing the contracts, two of the dentists decided to decline the contract because of the penalty section currently included in the statute. Both dentists felt they could not commit to the full five years based on their personal situations. The current penalty language is as follows:

If a dentist who receives loan repayment funds under this chapter breaches the loan repayment program contract by failing to begin or failing to complete the obligated service, the dentist is liable for the total amount of any loan repayment funds received.

House Bill 1035 will require the State Health Council to make payments at the conclusion of each twelve-month period and allow the state health council to prorate payments if during the twelve month period, a dentist doesn't meet the qualifying terms of the contract or leaves the program prior to completing a full year. Therefore, the dentist will not be penalized for previous service and payments. The bill also allows the State Health Council to amend the terms of existing contracts to allow for prorated payments.

The bill will align obligation language of the dental loan repayment contract to the health care professional student loan repayment program.

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