

**House Bill 1110 – Department of Human Services  
House Human Services Committee  
Representative Weisz, Chairman  
January 10, 2011**

Chairman Weisz, members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Alex C. Schweitzer, Superintendent of the North Dakota State Hospital and North Dakota Developmental Center (One Center) of the Department of Human Services. I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 1110.

Currently, NDCC – 25-03.1-23, Petition for Continuing Treatment Orders, only allows a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist to certify a report to the district court requesting a continuing treatment order for a patient in treatment. The Department of Human Services supports a change in this section of the code to allow licensed addiction counselors to be added to the list of professionals that can certify a report for the court. This appears to be an oversight in the code as addiction counselors are recognized as expert examiners in all other sections of the mental health commitment law.

Several reasons exist to modify the code:

- This fix in the code fully recognizes licensed addiction counselors as expert examiners.
- Licensed addiction counselors deal with most addiction cases and have the expertise to prepare reports for continuing treatment of patients.

- North Dakota has 23 counties designated as mental health professional shortage areas and accessing a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist in a shortage area is at times difficult.
- The increased use of licensed addiction counselors as expert examiners is an additional resource for statewide services.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions.