

Testimony
Long-Term Care Committee
Senator Dever, Chairman
November 7, 2007

Senator Dever and members of the Long-Term Care Committee, I am Carol K. Olson, Executive Director of the Department of Human Services and Co-Chair of the Governor's Olmstead Commission. Tami Wahl, Policy Advisor for Health and Human Services in the Governor's Office, is the other Co-Chair.

As a result of the Olmstead Decision in June of 1999 by the U. S. Supreme Court ([Attachment A](#)), Governor John Hoeven signed an Executive Order establishing the Olmstead Commission in August 2001 (Attachment B).

The purpose of the Commission was to evaluate the state's service system in relation to the *Olmstead* decision and to recommend action that ensures compliance with *the Olmstead* decision.

Members of the Commission include Commission Co-Chairs: Tami Wahl, policy advisor to the Governor, Carol K. Olson, executive director of the N.D. Department of Human Services; and representatives from the Attorney General's Office, Office of Management and Budget, and the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project; member of the North Dakota Senate; 2 members of the North Dakota House; and representatives from the Mental Health America of N.D., the ARC ND, AARP ND, and the N.D. Council for Independent Living; and a

representative of the public at large. Recently ad-hoc members have been sought, and currently there are three serving ([Attachment C](#)).

On December 18, 2001, Olmstead Commission held its initial organizational meeting.

A \$50,000 Real Choices Systems Change Starter Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provided financial support for initial commission efforts.

In February 2002, the Commission initiated an effort to assess services in North Dakota available to people with disabilities. Focus groups and public meetings were held in 20 communities across the state to gather input on services in order to help identify gaps. The results were intended to help the Commission formulate future recommendations for the Governor.

The Commission initiated and was awarded a Real Choice Systems Change Grant for \$900,000 in September 2002. An important element of the Systems Change grant was an RFP to elicit proposals from communities and organizations for pilot projects on new and creative service provision. ([Attachment D](#))

The Commission created a Planning Work Group ([Attachment E](#)) to develop a Governor's Olmstead Plan for North Dakota ([Attachment F](#)). The accomplishments that relate to the Governor's Olmstead Commission demonstrate that the Commission is actively moving North Dakota in the right direction ([Attachment G](#)).

The Planning Work Group meets about six times a year to review the goals of the plan and action steps, update new progress and develop new action steps. Recently a decision was made to seek out more consumers, advocates, and others interested in the Olmstead process as ad hoc members to collaborate with the Commission to its goals.

This concludes my testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.