

TESTIMONY
HB 1524 – HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES
REPRESENTATIVE PRICE, CHAIRMAN
MARCH 9, 2005

Chairman Price and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Linda Wright, Director of the Aging Services Division, Department of Human Services. I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 1524.

Case management for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) is defined as “the process within the framework of generic social work practice of providing specialized assistance to aged and disabled individuals desiring and needing help in selecting and/or obtaining resources and services, and in coordinating the delivery of the services in order to assist functionally impaired persons remain in the community in the most cost-effective manner. The specialized assistance is based on the results of a comprehensive assessment.”

The provision of HCBS case management is currently limited to county agencies (i.e. the County Social Service Boards). House Bill 1524 would provide the opportunity for tribal entities to provide HCBS case management.

The Department of Human Services supports this change in state law because it provides greater consumer choice. Home and Community Based Services recipients currently have the right to choose who will provide their services for all service categories except case management.

Consumer choice and consumer direction are concepts increasingly supported by the federal and state governments. As part of President

Bush's New Freedom Initiative, the State of North Dakota has applied for and received 2 Real Choice Systems Change grants. One of the projects funded by the first grant, through the Olmstead Commission, was to the Indian Affairs Commission to increase the cultural appropriateness of home and community based services. The Department of Human Services has been very involved in this project, with both myself and Theresa Snyder, DHS Tribal Liaison, serving on the steering committee. This piece of legislation is a direct outcome of the Real Choice Systems Change project.

Reimbursement for HCBS case management is already included in the Department of Human Services Long-Term Care budget through the various funding sources of Service Payments for Aged and Disabled (SPED); Expanded SPED, Medicaid Waiver for Aged and Disabled; Medicaid Waiver for Traumatic Brain Injury, and Targeted Case Management. Therefore, there is no anticipated fiscal impact associated with House Bill 1524.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.