

**Testimony**  
**House Bill No. 1390**  
**House Human Services Committee**  
**Representative Robin Weisz, Chairman**  
January 25, 2023

Chairman Robin Weisz, and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Pamela Sagness, Executive Director of the Behavioral Health Division with the Department of Health and Human Services (Department). I appear before you in support of House Bill No. 1390.

In 2021, 153 North Dakotans died by suicide. This is an increase from 140 individuals in 2020, and 134 North Dakotans who died by suicide in 2019.

This Bill creates a suicide fatality review commission who will review and evaluate the circumstances surrounding deaths by suicide in the State. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publication Suicide Prevention Resource For Action, 2022 states, "Monitoring and evaluation are necessary components of a public health approach to preventing suicide." The monitoring and evaluation completed by this review commission will assist preventing death by suicide in the state.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have. Thank you.