**NDHA Annual Business Meeting**

**In-Coming Chair Report**

**Keith Heuser**

**Oct. 3, 2017**

Good afternoon and welcome to the NDHA Annual Meeting. For those who do not know me my name is Keith Heuser and I am the President of CHI Mercy Health in Valley City. I have been on the NDHA board for over 7 years and served as PAC Chair for all but one and Legislative chair for the last 4 years. I am also currently serving as the chair of the Search Committee to find a new leader for our organization as Jerry retires. I will conclude my third term as chair of the board. I truly appreciate this opportunity and look forward to serving the hospitals of North Dakota.

Although this past year has been action packed and Craig has done a remarkable job keeping the board focused on what is important for our hospitals, this next year proves to be equally challenging. Finding a well qualified individual to fill Jerry’s shoes is going to be an exciting, yet intimidating, activity. Exciting because this will be the person who will lead our organization into the biennium that starts in January 2019 and beyond. That individual will come into the job, hopefully, about mid calendar year with their own picture of our future and the board will need to select carefully to ensure that we are selecting a person who reflects the needs of the Association statewide. Intimidating for the same reasons! This selection sets the tone for what we hope will be the long future of healthcare in North Dakota. We must get it right.

We will not have a formal session this coming year but there will still be legislative activity at the state level as they adjust to budget changes and work on ongoing committee activities. We will need to be mindful of any activity in the state that modifies anything affecting the hospital industry in our state. We will also be preparing our legislative priorities this coming year, some based on what the federal government does with ACA repeal and replace, but much on protecting the work already done by Jerry and our NDHA staff relating to Medicaid rates, Medicaid Expansion, and the relationships already developed with our state legislators. It will be crucial to have those strong relationships established and developed before day one of the next session.

The final priority for this next year will be to continue to lead our Association through a rapidly changing healthcare environment. I anticipate that we will see continued assault from the federal sector on health care provision, regulation and reimbursement. Much of the resulting activity will be managed by the AHA, but we must remain vigilant to ensure that the needs and priorities of this state are considered. Much of this will be accomplished through our state advocacy (which is why the PAC remains so important!) but much will also be accomplished through coordinated efforts across our state working with payers, regulators (vs legislators) and other healthcare provider groups.

I anticipate that this coming year will be filled with challenges, great rewards and opportunities to prove just how good we are. We need to be prepared and we need to be courageous to be successful and that is what this Association is designed to do. I welcome the opportunity to serve and look forward to hearing from our members for course corrections if necessary. Thank you again for this opportunity and I look forward to an exciting year!