



**2023 Senate Bill 2287**

**Senate Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division**

**Senator Ronald Sorvaag, Chairman**

**February 6, 2023**

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division, I am Tim Blasl, President of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). We support Senate Bill 2287 and ask that you give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Hospitals support this bill because it helps with our number one challenge: workforce.

To give an idea of how big this challenge is, NDHA conducted a nursing survey last summer. It showed that there were 1,326 nurse openings throughout the state. And hospitals contracted with staffing agencies for another 717 nurses. In total, hospitals have over 2,000 nurse openings.

The lack of nurses challenges our hospitals in both the rural and urban areas. Urban hospital wages have increased \$382 million since 2019, mainly due to contract labor. The escalating cost of contracted nursing staff and the upward pressure it puts on wages is not sustainable.

I do not have the magical answer to fill all these openings but adding nurses to the list of health care professions that may participate in the state's student loan repayment program is definitely part of the answer.

Please give the bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Blasl, President  
North Dakota Hospital Association