

Fifty-seventh
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

ENGROSSED SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 4027

Introduced by

Senators Thane, Heitkamp

1 A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Council to study the prices for prescription
2 drugs and possible mechanisms to lower those costs to consumers and the state, and whether
3 the state should establish a program to assist in the purchase of prescription drugs based upon
4 income.

5 **WHEREAS**, a study by the Center for Studying Health System Change reports that
6 prescription drugs are responsible for 44 percent of the increase in health care costs; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Medicaid drug expenditures for the 1997-99 biennium totaled \$47.1 million,
8 of which \$12.3 million were from the general fund; for the 1999-2001 biennium, the department
9 of human services budgeted \$50.4 million, of which \$15 million are state funds; and the latest
10 estimates indicate that the department of human services will expend \$63.5 million, of which
11 \$18.9 million are state funds while the department of human services is anticipating
12 expenditures in the next biennium to exceed \$80 million; and

13 **WHEREAS**, escalating prescription drug prices is an especially important issue to
14 seniors because studies indicate the cost of the top 50 drugs used by elderly citizens in this
15 country has been increasing at a rate that has outpaced inflation nearly two to one; and

16 **WHEREAS**, escalating prescription drug prices is an especially important issue to rural
17 residents because rural residents typically have lower incomes, limited access to pharmacies,
18 and pay more for prescription drugs than their urban counterparts; and

19 **WHEREAS**, studies indicate that inadequate access to affordable prescription drugs
20 results in increased medical expenses such as increased emergency mental health services
21 and increased nursing home admissions; and

22 **WHEREAS**, several states have initiated programs to address the affordability of
23 prescription drugs, including Maine's Maine Rx program and Indiana's HoosierRx; and

24 **WHEREAS**, several states have introduced legislation to address the issue of
25 affordability of prescription drugs, including Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio;

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA,**
2 **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:**

3 That the Legislative Council study the prices for prescription drugs and possible
4 mechanisms to lower those costs to consumers and the state, and whether the state should
5 establish a program to assist in the purchase of prescription drugs based upon income; and

6 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislative Council report its findings and
7 recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to
8 the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly.