

**House Appropriations Committee**  
**68<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session**  
**Representative Vigesaa -Chair**

Chairman Vigesaa and House Appropriations Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of HB 1157.

**Intent of this bill:**

- Provide \$500,000 one-time funding for construction of a Fisher House in North Dakota.
  - Veteran and Family lodging while undergoing medical treatment
  - Similar to “Ronald McDonald House”

**Need for bill:**

- Fargo VA Medical Center (VAMC) has the largest geographical area of any VAMC in the VA
- ND Veterans and families drive up to 400 miles or 7 hours one way to utilize the Fargo VAMC
- Up to \$9 Million cost for Construction and furnishing.
  - Federal VA cannot fund raise or add funds to the construction of house (by law). Fundraising is through the non-profit Fisher House Organization.
  - Fund raising pays for Construction and furnishing only.
  - Once the house is built it will be transferred to the Federal VA.
  - All ongoing costs are covered by the Federal VA.
  - State of ND will not have ownership or fiscal responsibility in the future.

**Outcome of bill:**

- Construction of an estimated \$9 Million house located on or near Fargo VA Medical Center Campus.
  - Approximately 16 Suites
  - Veterans and Families can stay at no cost while veteran undergoes treatment at VA or Contracted medical facility.
- Could serve up to 23,000 family members per year (4 per suite per night)
- Serve all of North Dakota, 17 counties of MN, 1 county of SD

This incredible Public-Private partnership includes Federal VA, State of ND, State of MN, Non-profit Fisher House Organization, Non-profit Dakota Medical Foundation and many private donors. Please support this important project.  
Thank you for your consideration.

Lonnie Wangen Commissioner-NDDVA

## Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where military & veterans' families can stay free of charge, while a loved one is in the hospital.

- These [homes are located](#) at military and VA medical centers around the world.
- [Fisher Houses](#) have up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room, and an inviting living room.
- Since inception, the program has saved military and veterans' families an estimated \$451 million in out-of-pocket costs for lodging and transportation.
- Source: <https://www.fisherhouse.org/about/>
- **Mission**
  - Funding construction of a Fisher House at the Fargo VA Medical Center where the families of patients can stay while their loved ones receive critical medical care.
- **About**
  - The Impact Foundation is raising funds to help Fisher House Foundation construct the first Fisher House in North Dakota. 100% of proceeds will go to help build a beautiful comfort home where families of Veterans can stay free of charge while their loved one receives critical medical care at the Fargo VA Medical Center.

Over 90 Fisher Houses in operation.

- Houses in our neighboring states
  - Minnesota- Minneapolis
  - Michigan-Ann Arbor
  - Nebraska-Omaha
  - Wisconsin-Milwaukee
  - Illinois-Chicago

\*This is not a ND Department of Veterans Affairs project.

\*More information can be found at: [www.Fisherhouse.org](http://www.Fisherhouse.org)

Federal VA biennium expenditures in North Dakota has surpassed **\$1 Billion**



Unofficial rendering of Fisher House ND-reflects local architecture

**Location & Construction:**

- Construction goal:
  - Begin 2022-2023
  - Land & construction funds need to be acquired.
- Construction, landscaping, furnishings, and artwork. estimated up to \$9 million
- Location will be on or near the Fargo VA Medical Center Campus.

**FISHER HOUSE  
NORTH DAKOTA**



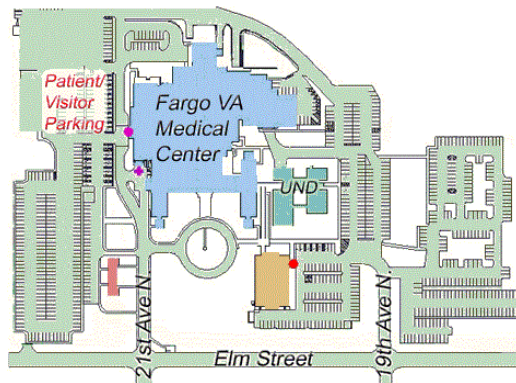
Rendering of Fisher House North Dakota.

**Fisher House North Dakota**

- 13,400+ square foot building.
- Approximately 16-Suites.
- Estimated to serve 23,000 family members per year.
- Serves North Dakota and 18 Counties in Minnesota and South Dakota.

**Donor Recognition**

- Donor Recognition will be provided on a permanent Brass Plaque located inside the Fisher House.
- Donations are for construction of ND House.
- Federal VA covers ongoing operation expenses after construction.



Donations accepted at Impact Foundation-Support Our Veterans Fund-Fisher House campaign

<https://app.givingheartsday.org/#/charity/235>    [www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org)

Questions: [fisherhousend@gmail.com](mailto:fisherhousend@gmail.com)





# FISHER HOUSE FACTS



## Fisher Houses:

- Are between 5,000 and 16,800 square feet
- Provide 7 to 21 suites
- Are professionally furnished and decorated
- Accommodate 16 to 42 family members
- Feature common kitchens, dining and living room
- Are gifted to DoD and VA upon completion



1,200

Daily lodging capacity



9.5 million

Number of lodging days offered

Since Inception (1990)



\$500 million

Savings to families in lodging and transportation



400,000

Families served

For 30 years, the Fisher House program has provided “a home away from home” for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. These homes offer free, temporary lodging to military and veterans’ families, allowing them to be close to their loved one during a medical crisis and focus on what’s important—the healing process. There are 86 Fisher Houses\* located in the US, Germany and United Kingdom.

\*As of April 2020



Fisher House Foundation has several other major programs:

**Hero Programs**—Allows donated frequent flyer miles and hotel points to be used to bring family members to the bedside of injured or ill service members.

**Newman’s Own Award**—A grant program that supports other military charities.

**Scholarships**—A grant program that provides scholarships to children and spouses of military families.



[www.fisherhouse.org](http://www.fisherhouse.org)

Ratings matter.



We’ve earned four stars (out of four) from Charity Navigator

A+

Our grade from CharityWatch



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