

**2021 HOUSE INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND LABOR**

**HB 1203**

# 2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Industry, Business and Labor Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

HB 1203  
1/18/2021

**Requirements of health insurance policies, continuation of Medicaid Expansion, repeal of the Medicaid Expansion program & provide application & contingent effective date.**

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Roll call</b>
Chairman Lefor	P
Vice Chairman Keiser	P
Rep Hagert	P
Rep Jim Kasper	A
Rep Scott Louser	P
Rep Nehring	P
Rep O'Brien	P
Rep Ostlie	P
Rep Ruby	P
Rep Schauer	P
Rep Stemen	P
Rep Thomas	P
Rep Adams	P
Rep P Anderson	P

**(11:10)** Chairman Lefor: Opens the hearing on HB 1203.

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Requirements of health insurance policies & continuing Medicaid Expansion.

Vice Chairman Keiser~ District 47: Introduces HB 1203.

Tim Blas~President-ND Hospital Association: # 1010.

Chrystal Bartuska~Life & Health Medicare Division Director-ND Insurance Department.

**(10:43)** Chairman Lefor: Closes the hearing. Request for the bill to be held.

**(10:44)** End time

*Ellen LeTang, Committee Clerk*



**2021 HB 1203**  
**House Industry, Business and Labor Committee**  
**Representative Mike Lefor, Chairman**  
**January 18, 2021**

Chairman Lefor and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee, I am Tim Blasl, President of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA). I am here to testify in support of House Bill 1203. I ask that you give this bill a **Do Pass** recommendation.

Hospitals are here today in support of this bill because it provides protection for people with pre-existing health conditions and continues the Medicaid Expansion program should a court issue a final ruling that all or a significant portion of Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional. Both of these programs are important to help people get, and maintain, health insurance coverage.

Under current law, health insurance companies can't refuse to cover you or charge you more just because you have a "pre-existing condition" — that is, a health problem you had before the date that new health coverage starts. These protections mean that health insurers can no longer charge more or deny coverage because of a pre-existing health condition like asthma, high blood pressure, diabetes, or cancer. They cannot limit benefits for the condition either.

These protections for people with pre-existing conditions are critical for several reasons. Before the law went into effect in 2014, pre-existing condition exclusions affected 50 million people, including 17 million children, nationwide. Of those with pre-existing conditions who sought private insurance, 47 percent didn't get it. They were either

denied coverage, charged a higher premium, or had their condition excluded because of it. Without health insurance, they couldn't afford treatment, which meant they wound up in the emergency room. Their expenses were either paid for by Medicaid or were absorbed by hospitals. And that resulted in higher health care costs for everyone.

We strongly support not only the prohibition on insurers imposing pre-existing condition exclusions, we also strongly support the premium protection in the bill. Being able to get insurance you cannot afford is no protection at all. The bill would limit how much premiums can vary. A health benefit plan could charge different premium rates; however, the premium rates may vary only in relation to whether the policy covers an individual or a family; a rating area; age (which may not vary by more than three to one for adults); and tobacco use (which may not vary by more than one and one-half to one). In other words, pre-existing condition exclusions made it difficult for people with even simple pre-existing conditions to get health insurance coverage for reasonable premiums. This results in less coverage and less access to important preventive care that keeps people healthy.

Hospitals and Physicians strongly support the continuation of the Medicaid Expansion program. The program covers about 24,000 North Dakotans. If Medicaid Expansion goes away, these 24,000 individuals will likely be uninsured because the cost of individual health coverage is too expensive.

Medicaid Expansion was designed to significantly reduce the number of uninsured and improve their health by providing access to routine health care. Adults enrolled in Medicaid experience significant improvements in access to healthcare and report positive health status, while virtually eliminating catastrophic out-of-pocket spending. The program has been very good for patients, North Dakota communities, and health care providers. Hospitals saw a significant decrease in the amount of uncompensated care since it started. Bad debt and charity care in North Dakota rose from \$102 million in 2008 to \$274 million in 2014—a nearly threefold increase. Thanks to Medicaid Expansion, bad debt dropped nearly in half to \$150 million in 2016.

In summary, hospitals support health care coverage for North Dakotans. This bill would help further that goal. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.  
Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Blasl, President  
North Dakota Hospital Association

# 2021 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Industry, Business and Labor Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

HB 1203  
2/8/2021

**Requirements of health insurance policies, continuation of Medicaid Expansion, repeal of the Medicaid Expansion program & provide application & contingent effective date.**

(11:29) Chairman Lefor called to order the work session to order.

Representatives	Attendance
Chairman Lefor	P
Vice Chairman Keiser	P
Rep Hagert	P
Rep Jim Kasper	P
Rep Scott Louser	P
Rep Nehring	P
Rep O'Brien	P
Rep Ostlie	P
Rep Ruby	P
Rep Schauer	P
Rep Stemen	P
Rep Thomas	P
Rep Adams	P
Rep P Anderson	P

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee work.

Rep D Ruby moved a Do Not Pass.

Rep Thomas second.

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Chairman Lefor	Y
Vice Chairman Keiser	N
Rep Hagert	N
Rep Jim Kasper	Y
Rep Scott Louser	Y
Rep Nehring	Y
Rep O'Brien	Y
Rep Ostlie	N
Rep Ruby	Y
Rep Schauer	Y
Rep Stemen	Y
Rep Thomas	Y
Rep Adams	N
Rep P Anderson	N

Vote roll call taken Motion carried 9-5-0 & Rep Stemen is the carrier.

(11:46) End time.

*Ellen LeTang, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1203: Industry, Business and Labor Committee (Rep. Lefor, Chairman)** recommends **DO NOT PASS** (9 YEAS, 5 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1203 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.