

Introduced by

Representatives Weisz, DeKrey

Senator J. Lee

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 50-25.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code,
2 relating to interviews of children in cases of abuse or neglect.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 50-25.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **50-25.1-05. Assessment.**

- 7 1. The department, in accordance with rules adopted by the department, immediately
8 shall initiate an assessment, or cause an assessment, of any report of child abuse or
9 neglect including, when appropriate, the assessment of the home or the residence of
10 the child, any school or child care facility attended by the child, and the circumstances
11 surrounding the report of abuse or neglect. Unless the report alleges a violation of a
12 criminal statute involving sexual or physical abuse, the department may not interview
13 the alleged abused or neglected child and any other child who currently resides or who
14 has resided with the person responsible for the child's welfare or the alleged
15 perpetrator unless the department has the consent of a person responsible for the
16 child's welfare.
- 17 2. If the report alleges a violation of a criminal statute involving sexual or physical abuse,
18 the department and an appropriate law enforcement agency shall coordinate the
19 planning and execution of their investigation efforts to avoid a duplication of factfinding
20 efforts and multiple interviews. The department or the law enforcement agency may:
 - 21 a. Refer the case to a children's advocacy center for a forensic interview, forensic
22 medical examination, and other services.
 - 23 b. Interview, without the consent of a person responsible for the child's welfare, the
24 alleged abused or neglected child and any other child who currently resides or

- 1 who has resided with the person responsible for the child's welfare or the alleged
2 perpetrator. The interview must be recorded electronically.
- 3 c. Conduct the interview at a school, child care facility, or any other place where the
4 alleged abused or neglected child or other child is found.
- 5 3. Except as prohibited under title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, part 2, a regional
6 human service center shall disclose to the department or the department's authorized
7 agent, upon request, the records of a patient or client which are relevant to an
8 assessment of reported child abuse or neglect.
- 9 4. The department shall adopt guidelines for case referrals to a children's advocacy
10 center. When cases are referred to a children's advocacy center, all interviews of the
11 alleged abused or neglected child conducted at the children's advocacy center under
12 this section shall be audio-recorded or video-recorded.