



Minnesota Home Care Association

April 15, 2021

Chair Abeler,

My name is Kathy Messerli and I am the Executive Director of the MN Home Care Association, a statewide association representing nearly 140 home care agency members who provide hands-on care to older Minnesotans and individuals with disabilities in their homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on SF 383, the Senate Human Services Reform Omnibus bill.

MHCA greatly appreciates the inclusion of two provisions in the bill that will move our state toward our shared goal as policymakers, the administration, advocates and service providers to increase access to the services that support older Minnesotans and those with complex care needs to remain living in their own homes and/or with their families for as long as possible. The two changes below cover the specific set of services that support older Minnesotans and those with complex care needs in their own homes, including home health aide, physical/speech/occupational/respiratory therapies, skilled nursing and home care nursing visits.

First, the proposed annual adjustment to the Medical Assistance reimbursement rates for home health services and home care nursing services included in the bill will start to move us towards more sustainable reimbursement rates. This annual adjustment to rates would be triggered by changes in the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) home health care market basket and would match the percentage rate of CMS changes. This will allow for increased access to these services that support older Minnesotans and those with disabilities to remain living independently in their homes and therefore avoid needing to access more intensive and expensive services.

Second, the proposed additional funding for an increase in the base reimbursement rates for home health and home care nursing will also help move us towards a more accessible and sustainable system of home care services. One of the biggest barriers to service access we hear about from our home care service providers around the state is the low Medical Assistance reimbursement rates currently in statute and their resulting inability to pay a sufficient wage to recruit and retain home care staff. Under the current payment structure for home care services, providers have to spend much of their time and energy struggling to recruit and retain staff who can make a higher wage elsewhere. Providing this increase in rates such that reimbursement rates are a bit more reflective of the actual cost of providing this service will help to increase access to home care services and support more Minnesotans to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

Thank you for including these provisions that recognize the critical role home care services play in the lives of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Messerli".

Kathy Messerli
Executive Director
Minnesota Home Care Association
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Mission: MHCA represents and supports Minnesota home care providers committed to high quality home care services.

Vision: MHCA will shape the home care landscape to improve and sustain quality care services.

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