

May 3rd, 2021

Chair Michelle Benson

Chair Tina Liebling

Members of the HHS Conference Committee



Re: Homes for All Health and Human Services Budget Recommendations

Dear Chair Benson, Chair Liebling, and Members of the Health and Human Services Conference Committee:

Now that we have reached this stage of the legislative session, Homes For All would like to relay the following recommendations for final passage of the Health and Human Services Omnibus package that will to the greatest extent help folks experiencing homelessness and housing instability in our state.

House Positions:

- **\$9m/Year in Emergency Services Program Grants** - The Emergency Services Program is the State's best response to Homelessness. It provides resources for shelter operations, but also mental and behavioral health care, child care, employment counseling, transportation, and more. A strong investment here will get people into stable housing quicker.
- **\$2.5m/Year in Shelter Capital Costs** - This investment is critical in getting our existing shelters more accessible. Across the state, shelters are not able to keep up with their maintenance costs, and many have outstanding safety issues that need to be addressed, such as stairways, windows, and heat failures. This money can also be used to expand shelter capacity where there is not enough, or none. 80 of our 87 counties fit that description.
- **\$1m/Year for Long Term Homeless Supportive Services** - These funds will assist in expanding coordinated response efforts to connect individuals to targeted services necessary to keep individuals in stable housing.

Senate Positions:

- **Increasing the Housing Supports Program base rate by \$100/month and allowing for longer periods of absence for individuals seeking medical treatment** - This provision would increase base rate funding by \$100 per month, allowing providers to work directly with private market landlords across the state to create more pathways to stable housing. With its focus on community settings—those places where individuals have their own lease—it represents a unique public-private partnership serving nearly

5,000 individuals at-risk of homelessness, with the potential to serve more in all regions of the state. The Senate proposal also includes a provision allowing extended Housing Support absences for individuals seeking healthcare treatment—a much needed policy update that will ensure tenants with chronic medical conditions or a history of substance use or mental illness can get the treatment they need without fear of losing their housing in the process. We are grateful that the House has adopted a similar provision on absences and support an agreement that at minimum meets the terms of the Senate provision.

- **Recuperative Care Model** - Developing a recuperative care model for people experiencing homelessness to have a place to recover from medical crises and capture federal Medicaid dollars to fund that program. This will lead to better health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness as well as cost-savings to our state medical system.

Thank you for your commitment to better outcomes for people who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability. These investments strengthen our shelter system and pathways to stable housing. Our housing continuum desperately needs investments in these areas of our homelessness response, and the coordination of these resources will result in a more equitable system in our response to homelessness. If you have any questions on these provisions please reach out to Zack Eichten at zack@mnhomelesscoalition.org or 651-829-0888.

Sincerely,

Chad Adams and Pastor Sue Koesterman
Homes For All Co-Chairs