

March 5, 2020

Dear Members of the Transportation Finance and Policy Division Committee:

I am writing in support of the bill HF 3498, which simplifies the process of establishing school speed zones.

As the largest health plan in Minnesota, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is committed to improving the health of all Minnesotans, therefore we strongly support local policy change to increase access to opportunities for physical activity. Regular physical activity is vitally important for health, and roads should be safe for kids who walk and bike to school.

According to a recent technical brief from Harvard, kids biking or walking to school get 47 more minutes of physical activity per week. A study from Active Living Research shows that after just 20 minutes of physical activity, students test better in reading, spelling, and math and were more likely to read above their grade level.

In addition to pedestrian infrastructure, lower speed limits can help save lives and support public health. Higher traffic speeds make crashes more likely because the distance needed to stop increases as speed increases. Higher speeds also increase the likelihood that a crash will result in someone dying. Pedestrians are especially impacted by higher speeds. A person hit at 35 miles per hour is three times as likely to be killed as someone hit at 25 miles per hour, according to research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

HF 3498 provides much needed clarification to the process for establishing school speed zones and making communities safer.

I hope you take this positive step to ensure kids can be healthy and active on their way to school.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Link
Senior Director, Community Health Partnerships
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota