

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Rep. Tina Liebling, Chair  
House Health Finance & Policy Committee  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for HF 838 (Bierman), HF 620 (Demuth), & SF 475 (Freiberg)**

Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members,

We, the undersigned dental providers, make up the Minnesota Safety Net Oral Health Alliance (the “Oral Health Alliance”), a coalition of safety net dental providers who provide oral health care to underserved communities across the state. As a coalition, we provided care to over 250,000 patients in 2019. We are writing you today to support the three proposals before the committee for the following reasons:

- **HF 838 (Bierman):** Periodontal (gum) disease is one of the leading causes of oral health problems in Minnesota. However, Medical Assistance currently does not cover nonsurgical treatment for periodontal disease. The Oral Health Alliance believes that individuals enrolled in Minnesota’s public health care programs should have the same access to this essential care as their friends and neighbors and strongly supports the proposal to expand Medical Assistance coverage for these services.
- **HF620 (Demuth):** Oral Health Alliance members serve patients in all four corners of the state, including throughout several health professional shortage areas in rural Minnesota. Recruiting and retaining dental providers in these communities is incredibly challenging. The Oral Health Alliance supports any proposal that seeks to increase access to dental services by attracting more dentists to rural practice settings, including changes to the loan forgiveness program and the creation of a new dental residency program.
- **SF475 (Freiberg):** The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has put incredible strains on our care delivery system. As the rollout of coronavirus vaccinations continues to progress, dentists can be an essential part of our state’s immunization response. The Oral Health Alliance supports legislation that allows dentists to be part of the solution to this ongoing public health undertaking.

The Minnesota Oral Health Alliance appreciates the opportunity to offer their support for these proposals and would like to be a resource as committee members look to improve access to quality dental care for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

**The Minnesota Safety Net Oral Health Alliance**



