April 14, 2015

Representative Matt Dean, Chair

House Health and Human Services Finance Committee

Dear Chair Dean and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting and the Local Public Health Association to express our support for HF1009, which increases Medicaid reimbursement for public health nurse home visiting, provides one-time funding to implement the Nurse-Family Partnership program in unserved areas, and provides additional funding for expanding NFP programs.

The Targeted Home Visiting Coalition and the Local Public Health Association are both statewide organizations that support voluntary, targeted home visiting as a core service for families. We share the goal of making high-quality, targeted home visiting available throughout Minnesota. Nurse Family Partnership is one of several targeted home visiting programs that is recognized nationally as a proven strategy for improving the lives of children and families. Under this program, public health nurses work with first-time parents in their own homes during a time of critical early brain development (prenatally to age two). Among the demonstrated outcomes are healthier babies, better school readiness, reduced rates of child abuse and neglect, and reduced risk of juvenile delinquency.

The Targeted Home Visiting Coalition is working with MDH, local public health departments, early childhood foundations, and others to develop a unifying system of targeted home visiting that includes consistent outcomes, standards, training, and evaluation of all home visiting provider organizations so that all participating families will receive high quality home visiting services. Outcomes-driven programs such as NFP are critical to improving quality and assuring effective use of scarce resources. Many of the standards the Coalition is considering are consistent with those used in NFP’s approach. In addition to these system development changes, additional dollars are needed to increase access for all families in need. The current Minnesota investment in home visiting falls far short of the resources needed to reach all families who could benefit from targeted home visiting services. HF1009 would not only provide funding to expand services throughout the state, but would generate additional support from the federal government by increasing Medicaid funding.

Your support of this bill is an important step in assuring that families are supported so that their children can be born healthy and succeed in school and in life. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia Coldwell

Patricia Coldwell, Coordinator

Minnesota Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting

# Lorna Schmidt

Lorna Schmidt, Executive Director

Local Public Health Association