



April 7, 2022

House Health Finance and Policy

RE: HF 4706

Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members:

Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) is a coalition of more than 50 organizations that share a common goal of advancing justice by striving toward a future where every person is free from commercial tobacco's harms and can reach their full health potential. **MSFG strongly supports the inclusion of HF 3153 (Morrison) in the House Health Finance bill.** This language (Article 3, Sec. 25) would ensure Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees receive comprehensive tobacco cessation treatment benefits without barriers, allow for telehealth coverage of tobacco cessation services, and expand the types of providers that can be reimbursed for providing tobacco cessation treatment counseling.

An estimated 574,000 Minnesotans – 14 percent of the state's adults – still smoke and need help quitting. Nearly half of adult smokers have a household income of \$35,000 or less, and those enrolled in public programs are twice as likely to smoke than the general population. **While Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare provides coverage for some guidelines-based tobacco cessation treatment, coverage is not comprehensive and barriers exist and change from year to year, creating confusion for patients and providers.**

Removing barriers to quitting will save money and lives. Tobacco cessation help costs a fraction of what it takes to annually treat tobacco-related diseases such as lung cancer and cardiovascular disease. The small fiscal note associated with this language will be likely be offset by future health care savings.

Finally, many provider types are not currently able to bill for reimbursement for delivering tobacco education and counseling, despite being trained to deliver this care. Limiting access to tobacco treatment services by restricting the types of providers who can deliver the service creates additional barriers for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees. **Adding more provider types that can be reimbursed will increase health equity by expanding access to care in communities most impacted by tobacco use - rural Minnesota, Minnesotans living with mental health or substance use conditions, low-income Minnesotans, and in communities of color.**

On behalf of Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation, thank you for including this important public health policy in your omnibus bill. We look forward to supporting your efforts in the weeks ahead to ensure this language is included in any final health omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

Emily Myatt

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Minnesota Government Relations Director, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

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