

Dear Chair Rep.Noor and Members of the House Human Services Finance Committee,

Thank you Chair Rep.Noor & members of the House Human Services Finance Committee for your service.

I am writing to you all as a parent of a 9 year old child with disabilities asking that the committee please support bill HF1434 (Edelson)/SF1201 to eliminate Parental MA-TEFRA fees.

Removing TEFRA fees is extremely important to our family because our income varies, so at times we qualify for regular Medicaid & other times we have TEFRA fees for our child. The process of the state trying to switch us back & forth every year or every other year is extremely cumbersome for state employees & has once resulted in our child 9 year old child being in a "limbo" of not qualifying for either due to a \$50 gap when she was just 3 or 4 years old just as we were getting services set up - it took months of calls & listening to MA say TEFRA employees need to release our child & TEFRA employees saying they sent our child's file to MA. Which I felt for their struggles, but was told our child was left without insurance for months due to system process issues, which should not happen to any Minnesota child.

In addition to the cumbersome system processes if families skie into/out of MA & MA-TEFRA that are time consuming for employees, county case managers & for our family, the TEFRA fees themselves are overwhelming for our family. We often ration our food, we only have 1 car (sometimes not even that works) & literally do whatever we can to not have to drive due to costs. We continue to use MA-TEFRA in order for our child to be able to attend the physical, occupational & speech therapies needed that my husband's employer insurance caps at 60 hours of therapy a year (initially our child needed 20+ hrs of therapy per week which is 1,040 hours per year, plus orthotic leg braces which on employer insurance cost \$4000).

The TEFRA fee is painful. I know so many families who don't even seek care for their child with disabilities & rely solely on school districts due to cost of TEFRA fees. Only school district, which schools are unique in Minnesota that our Special Education department is run by Department of Education, whereas in other states by Department of Health & Human Services. Schools are struggling to stay function & a "school diagnosis" & only school supports which are educational are no where near the same as scientific backed therapies, early intervention & medical support. Other families doe use MA TEFRA & have \$25k of fees per year. Our fee is only \$1700 a year but due to our limited income it is a challenge, we often max out our credit card to pay it.

The MA TEFRA fee feels like a penalty for being disabled - which I never want my child nor anyone else growing up to feel penalized for their disability. The world is ableist enough. It is already so difficult to navigate & access resources (even enter buildings) for people & children with disabilities in this world. Please eliminate this penalty & support HF1434/SF1201.

Thank you so much for taking my letter into consideration. Our family greatly appreciates all your service to the State of Minnesota.

Kind regards,

Kate Quale