



March 27, 2023

The Honorable Representative Mohamud Noor
Chair, Human Services Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Noor,

The DFL Senior Caucus is a grass roots organization of DFL seniors advocating for the needs of seniors statewide. Thank you for your leadership in sponsoring provisions to address the caregiver workforce shortages. We write to add our voices to support **full funding** for provisions being considered to increase resources for in-home and long-term care services for frail seniors and people with disabilities addressing the Caregiver Stabilization Act and Nursing Facility Payment rates now included in HF 2847.

Minnesotans in every region of the state are struggling to recruit and retain direct support caregivers including workers who provide critical services to older adults, people with disabilities and people with mental health care needs. Although their services are essential to the health and well being of many Minnesotans, estimates are that over 50,000 positions are unfilled for in-home care and care in long term care and senior housing facilities. The system has become unviable.

This crisis contributes to abuse and neglect and injuries to workers as well as to people having to move into facilities rather than stay at home, which is usually less expensive and what most people prefer. In addition, many elderly family members are caring for adult children with disabilities and worry about what will happen when they are no longer able to provide support.

Shortages are predicted to get worse. By 2030 one of every four adults will be over 65. According to a recent University of Minnesota report <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2022/12/06/report-minnesota-health-care-workers-leaving-at-crisis-rates> over 40 percent of direct care workers in Minnesota earn below 200 percent of the federal poverty line and nearly half use Medicaid or Medicare for insurance. Pay is simply not sufficient to cover basic living expenses and workers are leaving at crisis rates.

Very large ongoing investment is needed to shore up the current failing system, which is mostly dependent on Medicaid funding. The federal government will match such state investments in Medicaid 50/50. Now is the time to make these large investments, before the problem compounds itself and gets worse in the future. **Please ensure full funding for these services now before it is too late.**

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue and for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Kay C Hendrikson, PhD
Chair, Minnesota DFL Senior Caucus

cc. sean.herring@house.mn.gov