

Letter of Support for HF733

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing today as a provider who is pleased to see home delivered meals gain this committee's attention. Optage Meals is a MN based home delivered meals provider. We deliver meals through Minnesota's home and community-based services system. Section 1. Subd. 16. of HF733 shines a light and provides a solution to a major problem in providing home delivered meals to Minnesotans through the waiver system: the reimbursement rates for meals delivered are not the same for each waiver.

Alternative Care (AC), Elderly Waiver (EW), and Essential Programs Support (ECS) reimburse us \$8.06 per meal. Other waivers including the Brain Injury (BI) waiver, Community Alternative Care (CAC) waiver, Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI) waiver and Developmental Disabilities (DD) waiver have a home delivered meals service rate of \$6.53 per meal. That is a \$1.53 difference in service rate for the exact same service provided.

All meals ought to have the same reimbursement rate and all waivers should follow the same rate methodologies for incremental increases. Over the last few years, we have seen home delivered meal service rates increase for AC, EW and ECS, but the rates for CADI, BI, DD, and CAC have remained the same. This is alarming for many reasons from the perspective of the provider. The meals we serve are the same no matter the payor source. All the costs, time and resources that go into getting a meal produced, packaged, and delivered are the same for each payor, but the payment is not. We are concerned about that.

An equal service reimbursement rate for home delivered meals allows providers to continue doing what they do with confidence. Inflation takes a toll on providers when considering the increase in the cost of goods like food, produce, gas, parts for delivery vehicles and more. Home delivered meals through waived services is an amazing way to help stop hunger in Minnesota. Future forecasts point to more and more individuals pursuing home and community-based services. An equal reimbursement rate for the different groups we serve helps providers ensure they can continue giving the very best to their customers.

I am asking for your support in HF733 and hope the text above provides some insight on why the commissioner should consider making all home delivered meals reimbursement rates equal to the rates established under section 256S.215, subdivision 15.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have questions about the challenges home delivered meals providers face. I can be reached at akearney@preshomes.org.

Sincerely,

Avery Kearney, Provider Relations Representative

Optage Meals