

March 19, 2023

Dear Chair Noor and Committee Members,

My name is Julie McDonell and I live in District 51B with my husband and two children. My 5-year-old daughter, Macy, has complex medical needs due to a rare chromosome abnormality that also causes significant cognitive and physical delays. Macy requires the need for skilled nursing at home. In Minnesota, there is a significant discrepancy between the pay of home care nurses compared to their peers who work in hospitals and clinics, although their jobs are not any less critical or important. Nursing agencies are struggling to hire and retain nurses because they are unable to provide similar wages and benefits due to the fact that they rely on Medical Assistance reimbursement rates. I am requesting your support for HF2087 to increase home care nursing reimbursement rates on behalf of my family as well as all of the other families across the state who rely on the care of in-home nurses.

Macy began receiving in-home skilled nursing care last year. Prior to this, she had more doctor visits, hospital visits, and hospital stays. The incredible and dedicated skilled home care nurses have been essential in managing Macy's care and keeping her at home and avoiding hospital admissions. They provide frequent assessment and monitoring of many medical conditions as well as immediate intervention(s), when warranted. With the addition of home care nurses, we have successfully managed three illnesses at home due to her nurses being able to monitor her condition and provide the necessary care. Every illness prior to Macy's in-home nursing services resulted in a hospital stay, with three nights being the shortest stay.

As I am sure you are aware, hospital visits and admissions are incredibly expensive. A weeklong admission to the hospital costs about the same amount as six months of in-home nursing care for Macy. The average charge per day at Children's Hospital for a child with a respiratory infection and no other complication or comorbidity is \$18,532. The cost for 24 hours of home care nursing is \$463.30. Think of how much money this saves the healthcare system.

Not only has in-home nursing kept Macy healthier and happier, but it has also had a significant impact on the health and well-being of our entire family. My husband and I have gotten more sleep, had fewer illnesses ourselves, and most importantly, have far better mental health than we did before. There is comfort in knowing Macy is safe at home and that there is someone qualified to monitor and manage her many needs. This has lessened our stress significantly.

As I mentioned, Macy only began receiving home care nursing last year, and she has had over ten nurses during this time. When a nurse is unavailable, my husband or I have to miss work. Our daughter's nursing agency has been working hard to recruit nurses, and they are always looking for new ways to entice new employees; they just cannot compete with hospitals and clinics that pay a higher wage. The nurses' qualifications, experience, and loving dedication to my child and all of their clients deserve increased compensation.

It is for these reasons I urge you to support HF2087, which will allow people to have their medical needs met in their homes, rather than being forced to spend days, weeks, or even months in a hospital with excessive costs and exposure to other diseases. Thank you for your consideration of this important bill and the implications it has on so many.

Sincerely,
Julie McDonell

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