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March 14, 2023

Chair Jamie Becker-Finn
Minnesota House of Representatives Judiciary Committee
559 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Members of the House Judiciary and Civil Law Committee:

It has been my delight to return to the State of Minnesota and the Upper Midwest as Executive Director of Mayo Clinic Cancer Programs and Director of the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center (MCCC). On behalf of Mayo Clinic and MCCC, I extend our strong support for H.F. 1329 to allow the State of Minnesota's Cancer Registry to share data with other state and national cancer registries. I would also like to thank Rep. Carroll for authoring this critical legislation and we respectfully ask for your support.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death worldwide; in many vulnerable, minority and underserved populations and communities, it has become the leading cause of death. To guide our ability to successfully prevent, screen, diagnose and treat cancer in the patients and communities we serve, it is critical that we have access to integrated de-identified and anonymized cancer registry data sets from across our State and the nation. This allows us to understand the patterns and causes of cancer incidence and mortality in our communities, compared to other communities, and to determine how these patterns are changing over time. Through this knowledge we can design the best intervention strategies to overcome cancer for Minnesotans and determine if our interventions are having an impact. Thus, access and sharing of our data plays a key role in achieving these positive outcomes. Unfortunately, Minnesota has been an outlier as a state in not sharing information from its cancer registry with other states, the Centers for Disease Control, and agencies such as the National Institutes of Health. Consequently, we have not had the opportunity to apply for federal matching funding for our registry and cancer screening and surveillance opportunities, that would greatly benefit cancer patients in the state of Minnesota and expand our activities.

Recognizing the value and need for strong data to advance the science of medicine, Mayo Clinic has long supported this change for the state to share data with other registries. At the same time, from working with many cancer registries across the nation, we understand that such data sharing and access must occur in a manner that ensures the privacy and safety of individual cancer patients. The nation's cancer registries, including Minnesota's, are skilled in this process and goal. Hopefully with this change, we as a state and as providers and researchers committed to exploring this disease, can further harness the access to increased data to drive transformational change to serve our patients better.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical legislation. Please contact Mayo Clinic's Government Engagement team, Kate Johansen and Nikki Vilendrer, to discuss the value of this needed change further.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl L. Willman".

Cheryl Willman, M.D.
Executive Director, Mayo Clinic Cancer Programs: Rochester, MN/Midwest, Arizona, Florida, London, Abu Dhabi
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