



SEIU Healthcare
United for Quality Care

January 31, 2022

Chair Rob Ecklund
409 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55115

Jamie Gulley
President

Jigme Ugen
Executive Vice President

Phillip Cryan
Executive Vice President

Brenda Hilbrich
Executive Vice President

Rasha Ahmad Sharif
Executive Vice President

Dear Chair Ecklund:

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota represents almost 50,000 Minnesota healthcare workers in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and self-directed home care. We strongly support HF2656, which would reinstate the expired workers compensation presumption for health care workers who directly or indirectly care for COVID patients.

Unlike the workers compensation presumption law, the legislature cannot set a date for the COVID-19 virus to expire. The virus continues to evolve and endanger healthcare workers. In many ways, our health care system has never been more stressed, as burnout and staffing shortages stalk the entire industry from hospitals to home care. Now, more than ever, healthcare workers need to know you have their backs, as they face yet another COVID wave with no end in sight.

We understand the concern about retroactive coverage. If we would ever make an exception, however, we ought to make one for the healthcare workers on duty during January 2022, when the Omicron variant surged to record heights. While our current wave may be receding, the discovery of a new, possibly more infectious Omicron BA.2 variant makes it urgent to extend the presumption now. With luck, we will never see another wave as deadly as this winter, but we cannot be confident of that. If we are unlucky, the consequences for workers would be devastating.

The previous law showed that business and labor, Democrats and Republicans, can compromise and protect the healthcare workers who we all need to be there when we get sick. We call on all sides to work out a compromise that will honor those who have sacrificed so much to care for the people of Minnesota.

Sincerely yours,

Jamie Gulley,
President

345 Randolph Avenue
Suite 100
St. Paul, MN
55102

651.294.8100
800.828.0206
(fax) 651.294.8200
www.seiuhealthcaremn.org

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