

March 28, 2023

Re: HF 2847

Chair Noor and Members of the Human Services Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments on HF2847. The Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA) is made up of over 4,000 health and human service professionals statewide. Our members cover the health and human service spectrum—mental health providers, social workers, case managers, etc.—and are employed by for-profit and nonprofit entities, as well as state and local government agencies. Below are the provisions we urge you to include in your final budget provisions.

Senior Nutrition

We are thankful for the provision to include one-time funding for the Senior Nutrition Program. Many of our members work with older adults who rely on the State's Senior Nutrition program to meet their dietary needs. However, we urge you to raise the proposed one time funding to \$10M in FY24 and \$10M in FY25 which would adequately meet the needs of older adults. Meals for older adults are seriously underfunded in Minnesota and, as a result, the health of older Minnesotans is at risk.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)

Stagnant NEMT reimbursement rates have caused many providers to no longer provide this service due to increased fuel, mileage, and insurance costs. Many MSSA members have felt the impact of this crisis. The provisions included in HF2847 to raise MA reimbursement rates for this service will help mitigate this crisis and ensure that providers are able to continue this essential service.

Mankato Behavioral Health Center

We're thankful for the included provision to provide an appropriation of \$1.5M across FY24 and FY25 to the Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato to fund a community facing mental health training clinic. This will provide workforce development opportunities for the behavioral health programs in an area with an active MSSA membership. It will help address unmet need within the Mankato region for those on medical assistance, those who are underinsured, and uninsured populations.

Rate Increases

We are also thankful for the numerous rate increases included in HF2847 including those for Home and Community Based Services waivers, the Elderly Waiver, Long-Term Care, the Disability Waiver Rate System, and more.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support on behalf of our members and the clients they serve. Please reach out to us with questions, comments, or concerns at msancartier@mnssa.org.

Sincerely,

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