MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON LATINO AFFAIRS

March 1, 2022

Dear Chair Liebling and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee:

As you know, the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) is a state agency entrusted to advise and inform the state legislature in a nonpartisan way to improve the wellbeing and health of Latino Minnesotans. The MCLA is pleased to support HF313 (Rep. Lee) that would establish an Alzheimer's disease and dementia public information program.

This bill will help people across our communities by informing and educating them on the difference between normal cognitive aging and dementia, on stressing the importance of early detection and discussing cognitive health with a healthcare provider, and on the early warning signs of cognitive impairment. There is stigma and misunderstanding that exists about dementia, and HF313 will take an important step in helping our communities to overcome this stigma.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, three in ten Latinos do not believe they will live long enough to develop dementia. However, older Latinos are about one and one-half times as likely to have Alzheimer's or other dementias as older whites. Additionally, more than half of non-white Americans believe significant memory loss or loss of cognition is a "normal part of aging."

We support preventive efforts to reach underserved and diverse communities disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer's -including Minnesota's Latino population- with this public information program. We agree with the bill's approach to engage with these communities in the development of the program itself by requiring that program materials must include culturally specific messages developed in consultation with leaders in targeted cultural communities who have experience with dementia. The MCLA would be happy to partner with the Minnesota Department of Health on messaging to reach culturally and linguistically diverse members in our communities.

We respectfully ask this committee to pass HF313.

Sincerely,

Rosa Tock
Executive Director