

March 18, 2025

Chair Robert Bierman and Chair Jeff Backer
House Health Finance and Policy—Capitol 120
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Bierman, Chair Backer, and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council) submits this letter in support of H.F. 2007, offered by Representative Nadeau, to establish a spoken language health care interpreter work group.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota's API communities and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we express our support for H.F. 2007.

In the Council's 2024 Community Priorities Survey, which received hundreds of responses from across the state and our over 40 constituent communities, "Access to Healthcare" was identified as the top priority issue for Asian Pacific Minnesotans. There are over 365,000 Asian Pacific Minnesotans, of which an estimated 30%, or over 100,000, are considered Limited English Proficient. This has made accessing services, including healthcare, a persistent barrier for many within our communities. The Council has previously championed legislation to improve the standards of medical interpretation in the state by implementing minimum standards for medical interpreters in basic medical terminology, standards of practice, and interpreter ethics, while providing interpreters with access and support for training. While this previous legislation was not adopted, we believe that H.F. 2007 will provide an important opportunity for the state to consider and implement needed changes to ensure healthcare access for all Minnesotans.

This bill provides an important opportunity to provide interpreters and healthcare providers with clear guidance on qualifications and training to improve outcomes and patient understanding. Peer-reviewed studies demonstrate that the usage of family members or other ad-hoc interpreters results in a statistically significant increase in medical errors, when compared with even minimally trained interpreters. This is why access to qualified interpreters is so important.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill and urge you to support this legislation in order to create increased accessibility to quality health care for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

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House Health Finance and Policy
Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St
St. Paul, MN 55155

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RE: HF 2007

Dear Chair Backer, Chair Bierman and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee,

We are writing in support of **HF 2007** which creates a healthcare interpreter services working group tasked with providing recommendations that improve and support access to healthcare interpreting services statewide.

Accurate and effective communication between patients and health care providers is critical to the quality-of-care Minnesotans receive and the health outcomes they experience. Minnesota's health care interpreting community plays a vital role in bridging language barriers between health care providers and patients. Optimal communication, patient satisfaction, and outcomes and the fewest interpreter errors occur when limited English proficient patients have access to trained professional interpreters.

Yet, significant challenges exist in providing access to interpreter services including workforce challenges, insufficient reimbursement, and accessibility barriers. Healthcare interpreting needs are changing, and this bill creates a much-needed space for the healthcare interpreting profession to collaborate on solutions that address these challenges.

This bill before you was drafted through a collaborative approach, including input from interpreters, educators, state departments, health systems, health plans, professional associations and others – and the outcome of this workgroup will be collaborative recommendations that increase access to quality interpreter services for patients, improve healthcare outcomes, decrease health disparities, and address healthcare interpreting workforce shortages.

Thank you for bringing this legislation forward and we respectfully ask the committee to support this bill.

