



March 23, 2022

Dear Chair Schultz and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony for HF 4447. The Minnesota First Provider Alliance (the "Provider Alliance") is a trade association of personal care assistance ("PCA") agencies and waiver service providers. The PCA program is a critical service that assists over 44,000 Minnesotans in their home and community and employs approximately 66,000 PCA workers. Historically, the PCA program has been one of the lowest reimbursed services with a reimbursement rate that is much lower than similar type services. The PCA program is vital to ensuring that Minnesotans with disabilities and older adults can safely remain in their homes and avoid the need for more costly congregate care services.

I am writing you today to share the Provider Alliance's strong support of HF 4447 which, among other things, increases the implementation factor in the PCA/CFSS rate framework from 75.45% to 83.2%. This increase builds on the PCA/CFSS rate framework that was passed into law last session and recognizes that, despite significant investments in the PCA program made in 2021, the service is still woefully underfunded. The continued investment included in HF 4447 is essential to support the efforts of providers and individuals receiving services to recruit and retain workers by paying them a livable wage.

The Provider Alliance appreciates the attention this committee has paid to the crisis-level workforce shortages in the disability services industry. However, the primary obstacle for PCA recruitment and retention remains the low wages and limited benefits that can be supported by the state's \$19.60/hour reimbursement. There are few industries where the Legislature has a such a direct and profound impact on the quality of services provided and the standard of living of those doing such important work.

The Provider Alliance believes that HF4447 is essential to ensuring the long-term viability of the PCA program and we appreciate your support today.

Dena Belisle

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dena Belisle".

Board President, Minnesota First Provider Alliance

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