

May 3, 2023

Re: SF2934

Members of the Human Services Conference Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments on SF2934. 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.

We are grateful for numerous provisions included in SF2934 aimed at improving human services in Minnesota, such as investments in the human services workforce, the increased Medical Assistance income limit for older adults and people with disabilities, and Home and Community Based provider waiver rate increases.

Below are two specific provisions we want to draw your attention to and urge you to include in your final joint agreement:

### **Senior Nutrition**

We are thankful for the provisions included in both the House and Senate bills 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. Meals for older adults are seriously underfunded in Minnesota and, as a result, the health of older Minnesotans is at risk. We prefer the Senate position (under Article 9, Sec. 2) to provide \$15.791M annually in FY2024 and FY2025, which would help meet the needs of older adults, and we urge you to include this in a final agreement. **Please accept the Senate Position.**

### **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. We prefer the Senate's proposal to raise Medical Assistance reimbursement rates for this service and account for increased fuel costs (Article 3, Sec. 5) which will help mitigate this crisis and ensure that providers are able to continue this essential service. **Please accept the Senate Position.**

### **Mankato Behavioral Health Center**

We are thankful for the included provision in the House proposal (Article 8, Sec. 2) 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 a region with an active MSSA membership. It will help address unmet needs within the Mankato area for those on Medical Assistance, as well as those who are underinsured or uninsured. While this provision was included in the House version of SF2934, and the Senate version of SF2995, it was not included in the Senate version of SF2934. **Please accept the House position.**

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](mailto:msancartier@mnssa.org).

Sincerely,

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