

April 7th, 2022

Representative Tina Liebling
477 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF4706 Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill

Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members,

On behalf of Allina Health, thank you for your ongoing efforts to pass meaningful legislative proposals that will better the lives of Minnesotans. We are pleased to see a number of provisions included that will help address workforce challenges, offer operational support, and address access to services. These include:

- Addressing workforce challenges through various loan forgiveness provisions (Art. 1, Section 13-17). Loan forgiveness programs are an effective tool for both attracting more qualified professionals to practice in Minnesota, as well as recognizing the commitment and dedication from our current providers. We support the focus on building the mental health provider pipeline (Art. 1, Sections 21-22, 90).
- Supporting additional access to mental health services, including funding for inpatient Psychiatric and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (Article 10, Section 2)
- Offering operational support, including increasing fuel reimbursements for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) and ambulance services (Art. 3, Sections 18 & 19) allowing these services to remain viable and accessible to people across the state.
- Taking proactive steps in addressing access to services. These include ensuring medical assistance (MA) coverage for tobacco and nicotine cessation products (Art. 3, Section 25), prohibiting harmful white-bagging practices (Art. 6, Section 45), and ensuring unrestricted access to services for the diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment of rare diseases (Art. 7, Sections 6 & 7).

While we are supportive of the list above and other provisions included in the bill, there are also a few provisions of concern. The first is the inclusion of Nurse Staffing Ratio bill (Art. 1, Sections 26-30). Mandated nurse staffing ratios do not allow for the flexibility needed to address the needs of the patient or care team. Another concern is the lack of language in Article 1, Sections 1-5 that would provide automatic conformity to any changes to the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act. Failing to include automatic conformity will lead to conflicting guidance for providers, and will force Minnesota to reopen the issue again at a later time.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments, we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,



Kristen McHenry
Director of Public Affairs
Allina Health