

February 9, 2021

RE: HF 287 Commissioner of human services and health required to study oversight of sober housing programs, report required, and money appropriate

Dear Legislator:

Hennepin County and Hennepin Healthcare System strongly support a robust, culturally diverse, flexible system of chemical health. We know that our residents have a variety of health care needs, and we want to ensure that they all receive high standards of care. We write today in support of HF 287, to explore oversight of sober housing to ensure these services best meet the needs of our residents.

Hennepin County Public Health, the local public health authority under state authority, licenses a variety of health care settings, and chemical health should be no different. We take our duty to care for the public seriously, especially when the level of health care need is as complex as chemical dependency.

Hennepin Healthcare System, our state safety-net hospital, offers medication for addiction treatment (Medication Assisted Therapy) of opioid, alcohol, and tobacco use disorders. Many of our patients live in sober homes while receiving treatment, increased clarity is needed about what is provided through these homes and how they function to support the patient as it relates to staff training, privacy, optional or mandatory counseling, and how legal interactions affect their stay there.

Sober homes hold great promise in their ability to meet the housing needs of residents actively treating their substance use disorder. Hennepin County and Hennepin Healthcare System, therefore, support House File 287, a bill that would study whether sober homes should be subject to oversight, regulation, and licensing.

Sincerely,



Marion Greene
Chair
Hennepin County Board of Commissioners



Jennifer DeCubellis
Chief Executive Officer
Hennepin Healthcare System