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March 28, 2016

Representative Rod Hamilton
443 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF 2345 Interpreter registry

Dear Representative Hamilton:

The Minnesota Council of Health Plans strongly supports your bill, HF 2345, to create a tiered health care interpreter registry. Minnesota's population is becoming more diverse, including persons with limited proficiency in English.

HF 2345 would provide a mechanism to ensure that health care interpreters possess the specialized knowledge and skills to enable accurate and clear communication between patients and providers.

The registry would eliminate redundant costs of quality assurance activities incurred by health care organizations/providers who are currently spending resources on efforts to verify competency of interpreters working through their contracted agencies.

Research shows that use of professionally trained health care interpreters can improve communication between physicians and patients and save health care dollars by decreasing the likelihood of negative outcomes, reducing the number of inpatient days and interventions, increasing the rate of treatment compliance, and preventing misunderstandings that can result in a wrong diagnosis or medication error.

The Council has a single aim: to bring the opportunity for wellbeing within reach for everyone. This bill goes a long way to further that aim.

Thank you for your willingness to carry this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Kmit
Director of Policy and Government Affairs