Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee:

I write on behalf of my citizen activist group, Health Policy Advocates; we want HF816 enacted to restore fair and equal access to preferred health care providers for all Medical Assistance patients. Our group is pleased Representative Liebling agreed to be the chief author of this bill last year, has agreed to co-author it this year, and that Representative Hicks is carrying the bill this year. This bill rights a wrong which the state is currently imposing on the majority of Medical Assistance patients. It restores to them the Freedom to Choose the health care providers they want to treat their health conditions. The state discriminates against the majority of Medical Assistance patients by requiring them to be under the supervision of a managed care organization. But it does not require all Medical Assistance patients to be under such supervision, there is a minority not restricted to managed care organizations. That minority enjoys the Freedom to Choose. For those patients who do not want to be under managed care organization supervision, this bill is liberating. HF816 will give them the same right which the state has granted to only a minority. For those who like managed care supervision, they are free to keep it. But for those who are unwilling to submit to such supervision, this bill restores their right to freely choose health care providers. It is simply wrong for the state to enforce a two-tier system in the Medical Assistance program; these two systems are not equal. Please end the unfair discrimination by voting for HF816, the Freedom to Choose bill.

Sincerely,

Diane J. Peterson

Co-founder of Health Policy Advocates

St. Paul, Minnesota

End Government Discrimination Against Medical Assistance Patients

Pass the Freedom to Choose Bill

# **Mission of the Freedom to Choose bill:**

# **Restore equal access to all Medical Assistance patients to choose their own doctors and other health care providers.**

#  **SF404 Author: Dr. Alice Mann**

 Co-Authors: Jim Abeler, DC; John Marty, Dr. Matt Klein, Liz Boldon

# **HF816 Author: Kim Hicks**

Co-Authors: Tina Liebling, Peter Fischer, Brion Curran, Athena Hollins,

Hodan Hassan

* Eliminates discrimination, enforced by state government, among Medical Assistance patients. Currently, a minority of them are granted the Freedom to Choose their preferred doctors and other health care providers, but the state withholds this right to choose from the majority of Medical Assistance patients.
* Reduces racial disparities, allowing Medical Assistance patients the Freedom to Choose culturally appropriate health care providers.
* Provides good transparency and accountability on the tax funds paying for patients who exercise the Freedom to Choose their preferred health care providers. There is no payment transparency, and only the most minimum accountability, on tax funds devoted to the majority of patients who lack the Freedom to Choose due to receiving care through managed care organizations.

ACTION: Support this bill:

1. Become a co-author
2. Speak up in favor of the bill in committees and in floor sessions.
3. Vote for the bill in committee hearings and in floor sessions.

Health Policy Advocates initiated this bill. We are a multi-partisan citizen group in Minnesota for improved health care access and ending discrimination against Medical Assistance patients.



Contact Diane Peterson, 651 487 8007, oak7@centurylink.net; or Sharon Schmidt, 952 996 9070, sschmidt776@usfamily.net

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