

March 15, 2023

Re: HF1494(Frederick)/SF1489(Boldon)

Chair Fischer and Members of the House Human Services Policy Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HF1494/SF1489 which would establish a grant to help ensure health and human services (HHS) provider safety. This bill would help address a critical component of HHS provider burnout and the workforce shortage by providing human services agencies with the resources they need to ensure the safety of their employees.

Among human services professionals, workplace safety needs have never been greater. HHS providers are more likely to experience workplace safety incidents than those in other fields. HHS providers experience over 70% of all reported workplace safety incidents, but as many as 85% may not be reported. Workplace safety incidents have dramatically increased over the last decade and during the pandemic, and are a contributing factor to burnout. Professionals who have experienced safety incidents often report that unsafe situations are normalized in human services settings and accepted as a part of the profession.

HF1494/SF1489 would authorize the Minnesota Department of Human Services to award grants to HHS organizations to invest in workplace safety measures. Grants would be used, at an agency's discretion, to pay for safety equipment, systems to track, monitor & prevent violence, training, support, and follow-up services. The grant will also help collect data to determine meaningful future policy changes.

Importantly, this bill includes important safeguards to ensure client rights and protections. It does not include penalties or criminal charges against any client, patient, agency, or provider and does not enforce or endorse new safety measures that are not already in use.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support on behalf of our organizations and the clients we serve.

Sincerely,

Agate Housing and Services  
Aitkin County Health and Human Services  
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation  
Ampersand Families  
Beacon Specialized Living MN  
BeechWood, Inc.  
Bellis  
Bestview Care Options  
Carlton County Public Health & Human Services

Carver County Health and Human Services  
Catholic Charities Twin Cities  
Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Family Pathways  
Guild Services  
Haven Housing  
Heartland Girls' Ranch  
Isanti County Health and Human Services  
Kanabec County Family Services  
Lac qui Parle County Family Services  
Laura Baker Services Association  
Mayo Clinic  
McLeod County Health & Human Services  
Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health  
Minnesota Children's Alliance  
Minnesota Social Service Association  
Model Cities of St. Paul Inc.  
Morrison County Health and Human Services  
Nobles County Community Services  
North Homes Children and Family Services  
Northeast Youth and Family Services  
Oak Tree Support Services  
POR Emotional Wellness  
Reach for Resources, Inc.  
Renville County Human Services  
Social Work Department, Metro State University  
SpringPath Mental Health  
St. Catherine University-Department of Social Work  
The Salvation Army Northern Division  
Thomas Allen  
Thrive Behavioral Network LLC  
Valley Outreach  
Village Ranch Inc.  
Wellcome Manor Family Services  
Wright County Health & Human Services  
Yellow Medicine County Family Service Center