

April 7, 2021

Representative Mohamud Noor
Chair, Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Noor,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. On behalf of the Bridges to Healthcare program, we greatly appreciated the invitation to join Rep. Boldon earlier this year to present HF 679 and speak to the Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee about this important program.

When we spoke to you in February, our intent was to seek support for a direct appropriation from the Workforce Development Fund, similar to that received in years past. In reviewing the omnibus proposal released by your committee, we understand the committee is proposing a different structure for disbursements from the Workforce Development Fund. Should the committee change course and decide to again consider direct appropriations, we would respectfully like to request that the Bridges to Healthcare program be once again considered for direct funding.

Bridges to Healthcare is a public/private partnership that helps non-traditional students transition to a lifelong career in health care. These careers provide a livable wage, benefits and helps meet the talent shortage in health care and drive diversity of our workforce and inclusivity in our communities. The program has received direct appropriation funding from the State of Minnesota through the Workforce Development Fund for the past two bienniums, and prior to that received grant funding from the state that was eliminated. Bridges has proven to be a successful workforce pipeline for our communities by graduating more than 550 students in various health care tracks. These graduates are critical members of our health care workforce in southern Minnesota.

We appreciate the work of your committee as you seek to ensure the viability of our state's workforce development programs. Thank you for your consideration and support of Bridges to Healthcare.

Sincerely,

Bridges to Healthcare Leadership Teams – Rochester, Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna
(Adult Basic Education, Riverland Community College, Rochester Community & Technical College,
Workforce Development, Inc. and Mayo Clinic)

Cc: Representative Liz Boldon