

May 9th, 2022

Sen. Jim Abeler
Sen. Paul Utke
Sen. Michelle Benson
Sen. Mark Koran
Sen. John Hoffman

Rep. Tina Liebling
Rep. Jennifer Schultz
Rep. Aisha Gomez
Rep. Dave Pinto
Rep. Tony Albright

SF4410 – HHS Omnibus Finance Bill

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Conference Committee,

On behalf of Allina Health, we would like to thank you for your ongoing efforts to pass meaningful legislative proposals that will better the lives of Minnesotans. We are pleased to see items in both the House and Senate's health and human services omnibus bills that seek to address ongoing workforce challenges, offer operational support and funding, and address access to services. As the conference committee works towards a final agreement, we strongly support inclusion of the following proposals:

- Streamlining the licensing process for certain health care professionals by removing the duplicative background check and fingerprint studies (SF4410, Article 13, Sec. 5)
- Addressing workforce challenges by creating temporary permits for various health care professionals (SF4410, Article 14, Sections 4-12)
- Authorizing Minnesota to join the Nurse Licensure Compact, which will allow Minnesota providers to remain competitive and attract out-of-state nurses who are in good standing to practice in Minnesota without applying for additional licensure (SF4410, Article 14, Section 14)
- Extending the background check waiver to January 1, 2023 (HF4706, Article 19, Section 26).
- Investing in loan forgiveness programs for mental health and health care professionals (HF4706, Article 1, Sections 13-18)
- Supporting additional access to mental health services, including funding for inpatient Psychiatric and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (HF4706, Article 24, Section 2, Subd. 23(d))
- Offering operational support, including increasing fuel reimbursements for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) and ambulance services (HF4706, Article 3, Sections 20 & 21) allowing these services to remain viable and accessible to people across the state.
- Funding for Community Health Workers that will increase healthcare access, lower healthcare costs and improve health outcomes. (HF4706, Article 1, Sec. 43)
- Offering continuous, stable Medicaid coverage to children for 12 months at a time. Continuity of coverage ensures children have access to preventative and primary care (HF4706, Article 3, Section 18)
- Taking proactive steps in addressing access to services. These include ensuring medical assistance (MA) coverage for tobacco and nicotine cessation products (HF4706, Article 3, Section 28), prohibiting harmful white-bagging practices (HF4706, Article 6, Section 45), and ensuring unrestricted access to services for the diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment of rare diseases (HF4706, Article 7, Sections 6 & 7).

While we are supportive of the listed items above and many others included in both proposals, there are a number of items we respectfully urge committee members to oppose. This includes:

- Mandated Nurse Staffing Ratios and Hospital Staffing Committees ((HF 4706, Article 1, Sections 26-30, 95, 102 para. (c) Mandated staffing ratios do not allow for the flexibility needed to address the needs of the patient or care team.
- Conformity to the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act (HF4706, Article 1, Sections 1-4) without alignment to future federal changes. Failing to include automatic conformity to any federal changes will lead to conflicting guidance for providers, and will force Minnesota to revisit the issue again at a later time.
- Implementing potentially disruptive requirements for pharmacies shipping via common carrier (HF4706, Article 6, Section 53). This language could impact many pharmacies and have the unintended consequence of disrupting delivery to patients who are unable to make a trip to the pharmacy or those who value the convenience of delivery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristen McHenry". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kristen McHenry
Director of Public Affairs
Allina Health