

May 1, 2023

Dear Sen. Wiklund, Rep. Liebling and members of the Conference Committee,

As the largest specialty society in Minnesota representing more than 3,100 family physician and medical student members, the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) urges your support of the following provisions currently in either the House or Senate versions of the HHS budget. As leaders in primary care family physicians see it as our job to work with our teams to keep our patients healthy, address health disparities and manage our patients' chronic conditions. Investment in primary care is essential to ensure our health care system works for all Minnesotans and MAFP is pleased to see the many important aspects of this bill that support patients and primary care.

Expand Data collected by the APCD

The MAFP strongly supports the updates to the APCD that include the collection of non-claims data. This change will ensure that the APCD will be a stronger tool that collects needed payment data that is not included on the insurance claim. Policymakers will also benefit from the studies that will assist in understanding the current utilization of value-based payment arrangements and begin to provide a baseline for Minnesota's investment in primary care. This language is included in both the Senate and House bills.

Support Rural and Underserved Primary Care Workforce Programs

The MAFP supports the Governor's proposed primary care workforce funding recommendations as included in the House bill. Additional investment in our future primary care workforce is critical. Training family physicians where they are needed most, through rural training residency programs, grants to support medical education in rural and underserved areas and an increased investment in loan forgiveness for physicians and other providers are important steps in ensuring Minnesota has a physician workforce to meet our needs.

Limit mid-year formulary switching for patients on established treatments

The MAFP supports the limitations on mid-year formulary switching for those patients on established treatments that is included in the Senate bill. Insurers and PBMs are forcing patients to change from the medication that is working, even if that is not what is best for that patient. This is causing patients to lose access to their life-saving medication despite not being able to change insurers until the end of the enrollment year.

Spending target to invest in primary care

The MAFP supports the creation of the health care spending target commission included in both bills. The establishment of health care spending targets can be a valuable planning tool to ensure value and quality of care in our system. As evidenced in other states, targets that increase investment in primary care can help reorientate our health care system to one focused on prevention, continuity of care and connection to important social support through team-based care. While there is debate whether the board should have regulatory or fining authority, as a planning tool alone there is value in this board. We also request additional representation of practicing primary care physicians in the make-up of the commission.

Expand access to care for all Minnesotans

The MAFP supports efforts to expand access to affordable coverage included in both bills. The MAFP supports coverage for non-documented Minnesotans, expanding eligibility for MinnesotaCare to 250% of the poverty level, for subsidies to allow more Minnesotans to purchase coverage with lower deductibles and for the exploration of expanding the public option for Minnesotans. Efforts to expand access to more meaningful coverage are important to support the health of our patients across the state.

Family physicians and greater access to primary care are critical to health care in Minnesota. Supporting primary care workforce development, identifying ways to remove barriers to care and ensuring we have a system that adequately values and invests in primary care are essential considerations as this committee looks to the future. Your investment in primary care is much needed and the MAFP is ready to partner on these important initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexis Vosooney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Alexis Vosooney, MD
President, MAFP