



March 28, 2023

RE: HF 2930 DE-Amendment, Public Health System Transformation

Chair Liebling and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for the inclusion of funding to support public health transformation in the HF 2930 DE Amendment. Investment in Minnesota's public health infrastructure is crucial for building capacity of local health departments to fulfill foundational public health responsibilities.

We are writing on behalf of the State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC). SCHSAC is charged with providing guidance on the development, maintenance, financing, and evaluation of community health services in Minnesota. Our membership includes one representative and one alternate from each of Minnesota's community health boards, most of whom are County Commissioners. We meet regularly with a focus on addressing and responding to critical public health issues.

SCHSAC, local public health, and the Minnesota Department of Health recently partnered to publish a [legislative report](#) with the preliminary results from an assessment of the capacity of Minnesota's public health system. This assessment revealed that the capacity of public health departments varies significantly across the state of Minnesota. **No matter where someone lives, they should have access to the same public health protections—and the same opportunity to achieve their best health.** Minnesota's statewide public health system must be able to:

- Diagnose the health of each community by listening to people who live there—and then use data, evidence, and offer solutions;
- Investigate everything that affects health to prevent health problems before they start; and
- Rapidly detect and contain the spread of particular health threats like infectious diseases and environmental contaminants;
- Convene and cooperate with community partners to respond to community health needs and priorities.

While we are grateful for the investment in our public health system, we hope you will consider further expansion of investment in this system. We consistently hear from local health departments that their biggest need is funds for staff. We also consistently hear from local health departments that there are significant barriers to hiring staff on short-term funds both due to policies that don't allow for hiring on time-limited grants and because short-term positions are not attractive to applicants.

Every Minnesotan in throughout the state deserves to have access to a strong local public health department. Thank you for your support in this important policy area. We look forward to continuing to work with you this session and beyond to make sure local public health has the resources and tools it needs to give all Minnesotans the same opportunity to reach their best health.

Sincerely,

Tarryl Clark, SCHSAC Chair
Commissioner, Stearns County Board of Commissioners

DeAnne (De) Malterer, SCHSAC Vice Chair
Commissioner, Waseca County Board of Commissioners

Sheila Kiscaden, SCHSAC Past Chair
Commissioner, Olmsted County Board of Commissioners