

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Rep. Tina Liebling, Chair
House Health Finance & Policy Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for H.F. 1918 (Reyer) Establishing A Dental Home Advisory Committee

Dear Chair Liebling and Committee Members,

We, the undersigned dental providers, make up the Minnesota Safety Net Oral Health Alliance (the “Oral Health Alliance”), a coalition of safety net dental providers who provide oral health care to underserved communities across the state.

As a coalition, we provided care to over 250,000 patients in 2019 and safety net dental providers like us serve approximately two-thirds of all state program enrollees in Minnesota. We utilize a variety of evidence-based models—including permanent brick-and-mortar clinics, hub-and-spoke service delivery models, or teledentistry—which enable us to reach people in the most remote parts of Minnesota. We’ve also developed innovative clinical models designed to serve the unique needs of the individuals enrolled in Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare, including programs serving low income children in schools and Head Start facilities, treating individuals with disabilities and older Minnesotans in their places of residence, or utilizing bilingual health care professionals to serve immigrant and refugee populations. The Oral Health Alliance is writing you today in strong support of H.F. 1918 (Reyer).

For the last 15 months, a group of safety net providers, including members of the Oral Health Alliance, have met weekly to identify opportunities where nonprofit dental clinics, private practice dentists, and educators in the field of dentistry could collaborate, along with dedicated staff from the Minnesota Departments of Health and Human Services, on public policy initiatives that seek to expand access to dental care and address disparities in our current delivery system. In the end, the concept of a “dental home” that recognized the need for comprehensive and coordinated oral health services to be delivered in community-specific delivery models and appropriately addressed the cost of providing those services rose to the top.

That is why the Oral Health Alliance strongly supports H.F. 1918. The advisory committee established in the bill would allow the safety net providers, along with several state agencies and professional organizations, to develop recommendations for a dental home pilot project. This pilot project would be a first step towards modeling what a new dental home would look like, what quality measures would be associated with a dental home, and how those services,

including wrap-around services such as care coordination, would be reimbursed. We believe strongly that H.F. 1918 is a significant step towards ensuring all Minnesotans have access to quality oral health care.

The Minnesota Oral Health Alliance appreciates the opportunity to offer its support for H.F. 1918 and would like to be a resource as committee members look to improve access to quality dental care for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Safety Net Oral Health Alliance

