

April 15, 2024

Rep. Mohamud Noor
Room 379, State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Noor and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity to thank you for including both 1115 waiver bills, **HF 3642 and HF 3639**, in the human services finance omnibus budget bill. Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity is a statewide coalition of health professionals working toward health equity for all Minnesotans. We believe everyone deserves to live a healthy life, regardless of their race, gender, age, income, or neighborhood.

Expanding access to food and housing supports for Minnesotans is a critical part of whole-person care. HF 3639 requires the commissioner of human services to apply for a section 1115 demonstration waiver for Health-Related Social Needs. Other states have applied for this waiver to support community health and wellbeing. By providing medically appropriate nutritional and housing support as covered services under Medical Assistance (MA), Minnesota can make a significant positive impact on the health of our communities and reduce health disparities.

We also fully support HF 3642, which provides medical assistance coverage to incarcerated individuals prior to reentry to the community. This bill will help the State of Minnesota develop consistent standards of healthcare quality in correctional health services, pre-release services, post-release services, and community reentry. Individuals in Minnesota have a 15-fold increased risk of death from overdose after release. Providing adequate substance use treatment before, during, and after release, for example, would reduce overdose deaths in Minnesota. Without access to high quality, affordable healthcare services during and after incarceration, individuals will remain at high risk of poor health outcomes and death.

We are grateful for your support of these legislative proposals that will make a difference to eliminate inequities that exist to create a healthier, brighter future for Minnesotans. Thank you for your service and dedication to serving our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cuong Pham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cuong Pham, MD
President, Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity
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