



RE: Support for H.F. 11 in HHS Omnibus

April 7, 2021

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for including development of a proposal for a MinnesotaCare Public Option in the omnibus bill. This is among many important provisions in H.F. 2128 that would help more Minnesotans thrive and we urge you to support the bill.

Article 1, Section 66 allows the Department of Human Services to continue the work started in HF 11 to develop a public option proposal to allow more Minnesotans access to coverage they can use, maximize federal support, and ensure smooth implementation. Authorizing DHS to engage CMS and conduct actuarial and other analysis will ensure that Minnesota's public option proposal's costs and benefits can be clearly evaluated by legislators and receive federal approval.

However, we are disappointed that some portion of the coverage expansion proposed under H.F. 11, for undocumented immigrants was not included. Some Minnesotans who lack access to employer health insurance coverage or public health care coverage will receive temporary premium relief from the expanded Premium Tax Credits included in the American Rescue Package Act. However undocumented immigrants remain ineligible for those credits, as well as MinnesotaCare and Medical Assistance.

People immigrate to the United States for many reasons, and struggle to obtain legal status for many reasons as well. Once here, undocumented immigrants are neighbors, families, coworkers, essential workers, caretakers, community members, and they need health care like all of us. COVID-19 has made that all the clearer. While we do not have data disaggregated by immigration status, we do know that immigrants as a whole work disproportionately in many essential fields, communities of color in Minnesota have had disproportionately high COVID infection and death rates, and undocumented immigrants have been denied access to the health and economic supports that are available to others at their income level. Undocumented Minnesotans may be eligible for Emergency Medical Assistance coverage for COVID-19 once they are sick enough to be hospitalized, but the lack of more comprehensive coverage deters seeking care until it is too late, and complicates already tenuous recoveries post-hospitalization. There is no COVID recovery possible without inclusion for undocumented immigrants.

As this bill moves forward and as negotiations progress, we urge you to support health care coverage and/or other assistance for undocumented Minnesotans wherever possible.

Thank you,

The Advocates for Human Rights

COPAL

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

ISAIAH

Land Stewardship Project

Minnesota Budget Project

MNA

Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota Action Fund

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota

TakeAction Minnesota

Unidos MN

Voices for Racial Justice