



February 15, 2022

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

RE: Written Testimony for the SF 2786 (Housley)

Dear Committee Members,

The Minnesota First Provider Alliance (the “Provider Alliance”) is a trade association of personal care assistance (“PCA”) agencies and waiver service providers. The PCA program is a critical service that assists over 44,000 Minnesotans in their home and community and employs approximately 66,000 PCA workers. Historically, the PCA program has been one of the lowest reimbursed Medicaid services, with a reimbursement rate that is substantially lower than similar type services provided in other disability programs. The PCA program is vital to ensuring that Minnesotans with disabilities and older adults can safely remain in their homes and avoid the need for more costly congregate care services.

We believe that retention grants and sign-on payments are a valuable tool as the Legislature looks to address the ongoing and crisis-level workforce shortages in the disability services industry and appreciate language being offered in committee today that would include PCAs in SF 2786 (Housley). However, the primary obstacle for PCA recruitment and retention remains the low wages and limited benefits that can be supported by the state’s \$19.60/hour Medical Assistance reimbursement. The Provider Alliance believes that substantial, ongoing investments in the PCA program are essential for insuring access to essential disability services.

We hope that, as the legislative session continues, the Senate Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee will take up and consider SF 2967 (Utke) and make vital ongoing investments in the PCA program. There are few industries where the Legislature has such a direct and profound impact on the quality of services provided and the standard of living of those doing such important work. We believe the hard working, dedicated PCAs who continued to provide care to Minnesota’s most vulnerable citizens deserve to be prioritized as the Legislature seeks to recognize and address the ongoing workforce issues that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss, we would be happy to meet with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Belisle".

Dena Belisle, President
Minnesota First Provider Alliance