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March 21, 2023

Dear Commissioner Arnold,

On behalf of our more than 3,100 family physician and medical student members, the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) thanks you for your proposed feasibility study for offering free primary care to Minnesotans as outlined in SF 2744/HF 2680 and the Governor's proposed budget. The MAFP strongly supports this effort and wants to work with you to accomplish this goal.

A health care system that is designed to promote health and reduce costs is dependent on a strong primary care infrastructure. As family physicians on the front lines of health care across our state, we know that improving access to primary care is important to keeping people healthy. In today's healthcare system our patients are delaying or foregoing care out of fear of the cost, causing conditions to worsen before care is sought resulting in patient suffering and an increase in the total cost of care.

As outlined in the 2021 report from the Minnesota primary care stakeholders group [Investing in Primary Care: The Path Forward](#), "People who receive regular primary care can get preventive treatment earlier and before more severe problems develop. For people with chronic diseases, improved access to primary care improves health management and prevents or forestalls further complications. Higher levels of primary care in a geographic area are associated with lower mortality rates, trust, and treatment compliance. While primary care is not the solution to every health-related problem, few, if any, health-related problems can be adequately addressed without it."

In addition, decades of national studies have shown that ensuring patients have access to affordable preventive and primary care services results in better health and lower costs. The 2021 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report, [Implementing High-Quality Primary Care](#) identifies that primary care is the only health care component where an increased supply is associated with better population health and more equitable outcomes. We must change the system to one that rewards health instead of health care.

MAFP applauds this exploration of improving access to primary care for Minnesotans by removing all financial barriers. We stand ready to participate in the feasibility study and partner in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Alexis Vosooney, MD  
President, MAFP

cc. Sen Matt Kline  
Sen. Gary Dahms  
Rep. Zack Stevenson  
Rep. Tim O'Driscoll  
Deputy Commissioner Julia Dreier