

April 15, 2023

To: Senator Marty and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

Re: Support for MinnesotaCare Immigrant Inclusion in the SF2995

Chair Marty and members of the committee,

In Minnesota, we believe everyone deserves access to healthcare regardless of race, age, income or zip code. Across the state, we're united by the aspirations we share for ourselves and our families. We urge you to support Article 17 Section 17 of the Health Omnibus, which would remove the prohibition on MinnesotaCare eligibility for undocumented immigrants under the age of 19. And we urge you to continue to advocate for inclusion of adults as well.

People immigrate to the United States for many reasons, and struggle to obtain legal status for many reasons as well. Immigrants without documents are neighbors, families, coworkers, caretakers, and Minnesotans who need health care like everyone else. However, many are excluded from health care coverage that other low-income families and essential workers are eligible for. After the COVID-19 pandemic, we are long overdue to change this.

According to [2019 estimates](#), 81,000 undocumented immigrants live in Minnesota, representing 16 percent of Minnesota's [immigrant population](#) and 1.4 percent of the [total state population](#). An estimated 30,700 U.S. citizen children in Minnesota have undocumented parents, 2.4% of all children under 18 in the state.

Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for Medicaid, except through Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) which only covers care provided in an Emergency Department (ED), an inpatient hospital setting resulting from an ED visit, or limited additional services when specifically approved to prevent an emergency condition within 48 hours.

EMA does not cover chronic or non-emergency conditions *even when the long-term effect would be hospitalization or death*. EMA does not cover the primary and preventative services people need to support their wellbeing and ongoing health needs. Although uninsured undocumented immigrants may receive sliding-scale primary care at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), there are only 17 FQHCs in Minnesota, 12 of which are in Minneapolis or St. Paul, and there is much essential specialty care they do not provide.

Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right recognized by the United Nations and the World Health Organization. Denying certain immigrants access to healthcare contributes to Minnesota's health inequities. One in three Latina women in Minnesota reported that they could not see a doctor because of costs in 2021. Immigrants receive optimal care and screening at significantly lower rates than U.S. born Minnesotans for a range of conditions including asthma, diabetes, and mental health needs. Latinx Minnesotans' have died of COVID-19 at twice the age-adjusted rate of white Minnesotans and their age-adjusted ICU-admittance rate for COVID-19 is nearly four times higher.

Undocumented Minnesotans contribute heavily to Minnesota's economy. In 2018, undocumented immigrants in Minnesota paid an estimated \$191 million in federal taxes and \$108 million in state and local taxes. Immigrant workers make up more than 1 in 10 Minnesota workers. According to Census Bureau Data, 69% of undocumented immigrants work in front-line jobs considered "essential" during COVID-19, including agriculture, meat packing, grocery, manufacturing, janitorial and cleaning services, security, and construction.

For all of these reasons, many states either include or are considering including low-income undocumented immigrants through state-funded healthcare programs. Eleven states (CA, CT, IL, MA, ME, NJ, NY, OR, RI, VT, WA) and D.C. [already cover](#) undocumented youth with state-only funds. [Five states and the District of Columbia](#) cover some or all age groups of undocumented adults using state-only funds.

We ask you to support the inclusion of undocumented community members in MinnesotaCare this session.

Signed,

Black Immigrant Collective

City of Minneapolis

City of St. Paul

Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

Forprogress.org

Hennepin County

Hennepin Healthcare

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

Immigrant Welcoming Working Group, Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis

Interfaith Coalition on Immigration (ICOM)

ISAIAH

Jewish Community Action

Land Stewardship Project

LatinoLEAD

Legal Services Advocacy Project

Minnesota Budget Project

Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity (MDHEQ)

Minnesota Farmers Union

Mitchell Hamline School of Law - Health Law Clinic

MN Immigrant Movement (MI)

MUUSJA, MN Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance

Portico Healthnet

Rural Organizing Project of ISAIAH

Spirit of St Stephen's Catholic Community Sanctuary & Resistance Task Force Committee

TakeAction Minnesota

The Advocates for Human Rights

Unidos MN

Voices For Racial Justice