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JANUARY 30, 2023
CHAIR WIKLUND
MEMBERS OF THE HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Dear Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to express support for SF388. I want to lift up one item listed in the legislation - and fully support everything included: **Investment in Minnesota's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).**

Comprehensive, reliable data is crucial to understanding our state's progress toward its goal of ending homelessness, and that requires ongoing investment in data infrastructure. Minnesota's HMIS enables planners and policy makers to evaluate programs' effectiveness, and researchers to understand the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities. It enables service providers to refer individuals and families to available housing units and, in Minnesota's largest county, allows clients in need of a shelter bed to reserve one in a dignified way.

Minnesota recognizes the criticality of HMIS as its use is mandated by ten (10) state programs, including the Department of Human Services (DHS) Homeless Youth Act, and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP). **However, in 17 years of using the HMIS, Minnesota does not yet guarantee HMIS funding from year to year.**

As the state system administrator, ICA does more than simply run the software. ICA provides ongoing training (nearly 700 new users in 2021 and in 2022), technical support (answering 9,000 inquiries in 2021), and data literacy coaching for service providers. We maintain a community presence across the state so service providers know they have data support. We help planners and policy makers understand the programs in their communities in concert through dashboarding like [the MN Dash to End Homelessness](#). The HMIS Governing Board hosts a collaborative, statewide monitoring initiative that helps service providers enter data in the system is complete, accurate, and timely. This initiative enables ICA to provide tailored support to users, while also providing an accountability mechanism for those who oversee their funding.

Nearly 90% (24,000) of the homeless service beds in Minnesota are tracked in HMIS year-round. As programs change – whether adding warming centers, shifting population focus, or adding new units, ICA ensures that HMIS represents that change.

Thank you for your efforts. Please pass SF388.

Reverently,



BRITT HEINZ-AMBORN, MPP
HMIS DIRECTOR