



February 15, 2023

Re: SF 896, Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and Lead Utke,

The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota is a legal services organization with Minnesota offices in Austin, Moorhead, St. Paul, and Worthington. We are committed to supporting immigrants on the pathway to citizenship through education, representation, and advocacy. Every day, ILCM works with new Americans across the state who are contributing to our community but who cannot access preventative care or medical treatment because their immigration status prevents them from obtaining affordable, quality healthcare. We ask for your support of SF 896, which expands the eligibility for MinnesotaCare regardless of immigration status.

New Americans face multiple impediments to obtaining needed healthcare. Lack of insurance coverage is a key factor. Undocumented immigrants have an uninsured rate of 45 percent compared to 23 percent of documented immigrants and nine percent of U.S. citizens. More broadly, many new Americans are fearful of utilizing public and private health care even when they are entitled to it for fear that it could impact their present or future immigration status. Further, many new Americans work in critical, but low-wage jobs, resulting in food and housing insecurity that further worsen health outcomes.

MinnesotaCare is a well-established healthcare coverage program that as of July 2022 enabled 107,973 individuals without employer-sponsored health insurance or Medical Assistance to access healthcare. With the proposed amendment, MinnesotaCare can change the lives of many more Minnesota residents, and our state can clearly show how much it values new Americans. Nine states have extended state healthcare coverage to all income-eligible children, and others have initiated programs that offer healthcare coverage to undocumented adults in low-income households. Minnesota should reinforce its status as a leader in welcoming and integrating new Americans by adopting SF 896, which will increase access to all low-income Minnesotans and give all of Minnesota a healthier future.

Respectfully submitted,

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