

I am a Minnesota family physician writing in support of the MinnesotaCare Inclusion Act, HF1095/SF896. I have worked in community medicine in St Paul for thirteen years. I have learned two different medical systems, one for the insured, and one for the uninsurable. The work has wracked my brain and broken my heart over and over and over again as undocumented immigrants forgo the care they need, due to cost. I have looked into face after face and told them, in so many words, that their lives and their suffering and their illness don't matter the same as everyone else's. This is an easy thing to say from a distant congress room, but it is hard personally and professionally to say it to someone's face. Of course, many of these patients eventually reach a critical point in their illnesses where they have no option but to seek emergency care at the hospital. They receive temporary, top-notch care, and then are discharged back into a world where they cannot do any of the follow up testing or appointments that were recommended. The hospital is unpaid for their stay. And so, the cycle continues. It would be an amazingly easy cycle to break, if only undocumented immigrants had access to health insurance.

Thank you for your consideration of the MinnesotaCare Inclusion Act. It is a humane, compassionate, and very sensible proposal.

Sincerely,

Jessica Pereira MD