

March 9, 2023

Re: SF1489 (Baldon)

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to share our support for SF1489 which would establish a grant to help ensure health and human services (HHS) provider safety. This bill would help address a critical component of HHS provider burnout and the workforce shortage by providing human services agencies with the resources they need to ensure the safety of their employees.

Among human services professionals, workplace safety needs have never been greater. HHS providers are more likely to experience workplace safety incidents than those in other fields. HHS providers experience over 70% of all reported workplace safety incidents, but as many as 85% may not be reported. Workplace safety incidents have dramatically increased over the last decade and during the pandemic and are a contributing factor to burnout. Professionals who have experienced safety incidents often report that unsafe situations are normalized in human services settings and accepted as a part of the profession.

SF1489 would authorize the Minnesota Department of Human Services to award grants to HHS organizations to invest in workplace safety measures. Grants would be used, at an agency's discretion, to pay for safety equipment, systems to track, monitor & prevent violence, training, support, and follow-up services. The grant will also help collect data to determine meaningful future policy changes.

Importantly, this bill includes safeguards to ensure client rights and protections. It does not include penalties or criminal charges against any client, patient, agency, or provider and does not enforce or endorse new safety measures that are not already in use.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support on behalf of our organizations and the clients we serve.

Sincerely,

Agate Housing and Services

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

Ampersand Families

Beacon Specialized Living MN

Bellis

Bestview Care Options

Carlton County Public Health & Human Services

Catholic Charities Twin Cities

Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato

Family Pathways

Guild Services

Heartland Girls' Ranch

Laura Baker Services Association

Mayo Clinic

Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

Minnesota Social Service Association

Model Cities of St. Paul Inc.

Nobles County Community Services

North Homes Children and Family Services

Northeast Youth and Family Services

Oak Tree Support Services

POR Emotional Wellness

Reach for Resources, Inc.

Renville County Human Services

Social Work Department, Metro State University

SpringPath Mental Health

The Salvation Army Northern Division

Thomas Allen

University of Minnesota Twin Cities School of Social Work

Village Ranch Inc.

Wellcome Manor Family Services

Wright County Health & Human Services

Yellow Medicine County Family Service Center