



21 March 2023

Senate Health Finance Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue W
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: SF 2995 (Wiklund) Department of Health Budget Bill
Section: COVID Delayed Preventative Care

Chair Wiklund and Committee Members,

The American Heart Association writes to you in support of SF 2995 and more specifically, the provision relating to COVID delayed preventative care. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred mass disruption, most notably in health sphere. Minnesota saw a significant decline in healthcare visits with nearly a 30% reduction from 2019 to 2021, and further exacerbating existing health disparities.

Delays in seeking preventative care led to late-stage diagnoses and poorer health outcomes. Early in the pandemic, people with pre-existing heart disease and stroke symptoms were reluctant to seek medical care. This resulted in more advanced stages of cardiovascular conditions which required more acute or urgent treatment for what may have been an otherwise manageable condition. Sadly, this also resulted in an escalation of cardiovascular-related deaths in 2020, in which we saw more people die from cardiovascular-related causes than in any single year since 2003.

This proposal seeks to minimize the gaps that were aggravated because of the pandemic by offering support to the communities that were disproportionately impacted by limited access to care. These funds are an investment that will provide a link to rural Minnesotans, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and individuals with disabilities who delayed or did not seek critically needed health screening and care with services that are culturally appropriate, tailored for rural and urban communities, address underlying issues.

We thank the committee for the consideration and respectfully urge for member support.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Megan Hennen".

Megan Hennen
Government Relations Director, MN
American Heart Association