

March 21, 2023

Chair Melissa H. Wiklund
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota State Senate

Re: HF2995 (Wiklund): Department of Health Budget Bill
Section: COVID Delayed Preventive Care

Dear Madame Chair Melissa H. Wiklund and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing to express my support for HF 2995 (Wilund) Health Budget Bill for the section titled: COVID Delayed Preventive Care.

As Medical Director of Health Equity and Health Promotion at Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation, I see this bill as critical to closing gaps in equitable care. I am fortunate to be both a practicing preventive cardiologist and also have the distinct pleasure to work on our strategy for population health, community health and policy. HF 2930 has the potential to improve the disparate care that we see exponentially occurring after the pandemic.

Delayed care due to COVID-19 has significantly impacted the health of Minnesotans. Between 2019 and 2021 there was a close to 30% reduction in health care visit impacting 1.6 million Minnesotans. Delayed care was much higher for Minnesotans who have a chronic health condition or reported having poorer health. Rural, financially distressed, and Black, Indigenous and People of Color have higher rates of chronic disease than white Minnesotans. They are also more likely to be diagnosed later when the disease is advanced, which can lead to reduced quality of life, disability or death. For example, Black Minnesotans between the ages of 25 and 44 are twice as likely to die from heart disease than the population average.

This bill will address the impact of delayed and foregone care by funding grants across the state that will support:

- Community-led organizations statewide to link people to in-person, community-based and telehealth services, and address social needs and underlying causes of poor health
- Health care clinics and systems to be better equipped with culturally relevant interventions and improve care coordination, including the use of community health workers
- Telehealth use focused on preventive and chronic disease management
- Policy recommendations for improved payer reimbursement and sustainability of preventive care
- Evaluation of community and clinical chronic disease screening and management programs

My organization, the Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation looks forward to partnering with the Minnesota Department of Health on supporting this work.

We respectfully ask this committee to support the COVID Delayed Care Prevention component.

Courtney Jordan Baechler, MD, MS
Medical Director, Health Equity and Health Promotion
Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation