

Chair, Melissa H. Wiklund  
Vice Chair, Alice Mann  
Ranking Minority Member, Paul J. Utke

Dear Health and Human Services Committee Leadership, my name is Billy Hanlon. I am the Director of Advocacy & Outreach for the Minnesota ME/CFS Alliance and a person living with ME/CFS. A high percentage of long COVID patients are meeting the diagnostic criteria for ME/CFS, which is what brings me here today.

Long COVID is a public health crisis that is severely impacting hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans physically, professionally, emotionally & financially. It is having an enormous impact to the labor force participation rate in our state & is detrimental to the health of our state's economy.

It is worth reiterating today that these infectious-associated diseases destroy identities, futures, families, and careers. They continue to be vastly under-served, under-funded, under-resourced, under-studied, and highly marginalized, leaving a strong feeling of medical abandonment. There is profound suffering & burden felt in endless ways.

The Minnesota Department of Health's resources to continue to address this Long COVID crisis are inadequate. The Supporting Long COVID Survivors and Monitoring Impact budget proposal by Governor Walz will help MDH bridge some of these inequitable gaps. This proposal will help with funding towards raising awareness, developing consensus guidance, and supporting long COVID survivors and communities. This funding is crucial for Minnesota's response to this crisis. I implore & sincerely urge you to support this critical proposal & recommendation.

Thank you,

Billy Hanlon  
Director of Advocacy & Outreach  
Minnesota ME/CFS Alliance