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RE: Re: SF2995 (Wiklund): Department of Health Budget Bill
Section: COVID Delayed Preventive Care

Dear Senators Wiklund, Mann and Utke

I would like to take this opportunity to HIGHLY support passage of Senate File 2995 and specifically the section relating to COVID Delayed Preventive Care. After recently retiring from the Public Health field after 45 years and most recently as the Supervisor of the Cardiovascular Health Unit at the Minnesota Department of Health for 18 of those years, I believe I can reflect and provide some input for your deliberations. In the years of my practice it became acutely evident that in the State of Minnesota we are in desperate need to address health disparities. Access to care for disparate populations relating specifically to chronic disease prevention, acute treatment and disease management is greatly needed. We continue to see statistics that underscore the problem especially related to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, asthma and management of disease. A good example of this is managing the ever-rising condition of high blood pressure. These problems have been going on for many years and unfortunately, we often turn away from dealing with them. For populations such as African Americans, Asians, American Indians and for populations leaving in rural areas these issues are not new. Perhaps, if there is a silver lining to the COVID pandemic, it provided us with a wake-up call. In the Cardiovascular arena, which I am acutely aware of, COVID patients or even the public in general refusing to seek Emergency Room care for the treatment of a Cardiac Arrest or Stroke and unfortunately, we lost many people.

The bottom line is this:

If we compromise on needed care for all of us, we all suffer. Lets use this wake up call to set the course right to assist in addressing the gaps in health care and set a pattern for the future that is more proactive. In closing I encourage you and all of your colleagues to be bold and pass Senate File 2995 and specifically the section relating to COVID Delayed Preventive Care. This will provide necessary intervention strategies for our communities, local public health, epidemiological analysis, and ongoing policy development, all for those in great need. The time has come!

Sincerely

Stanton B Shanedling, PhD, MPH