



March 30, 2023

RE: Comments on SF2995A2, 2023 Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

Thank you for your work preparing the omnibus bill. We recognize the needs in Health and Human Services area and appreciate the care and attention you have put into crafting this bill.

MNACHC represents the state's 17 federally qualified health centers or FQHCs. FQHCs provide primary medical, behavioral health, and oral health services to 200,000 Minnesotans regardless of ability to pay. For over five decades, FQHCs have tailored their services to address the social drivers of our patient's health outcomes.

Thank you for including a number of provisions that will have positive impact on the primary care safety net.

MA/DA Apprenticeship

We would like to thank you for including Article 4 Section 51, the MNACHC MA/DA Apprenticeship program. In 2022, MNACHC, created a small apprenticeship program for Medical and Dental Assistants. This 12-month program allows apprentices to work full-time at their FQHC while earning a living wage and benefits.

This program recruits apprentices from the communities that they serve and removes barriers around GED or higher education for individuals to apply. This creates economic opportunities for a diverse workforce while enhancing access to health care in medically underserved communities.

The program started with 10 Medical Assistant apprentices and 2 dental apprentices. This year there are 8 medical assistance apprentices and 10 dental apprentices with a 40% increase in participating health centers. Of the apprentices trained health centers have seen a 100% retention rate of apprentices now serving patients statewide.

We appreciate your support as we continue to grow the healthcare workforce with a more diverse workforce.

There are a number of provisions in HF2995 that will enhance FQHC patients' access care:

Medicaid Services Expansion: MNACHC appreciates the expansion of available services for individuals enrolled in public programs. Specifically, the adult benefit set.

Continuous Eligibility: Many FQHC patients “churn” on and off Medicaid and MinnesotaCare even though they are eligible for these programs. This churn causes significant distress for patients, administrative burden on FQHC staff, and confusion in the health care system. Thank you for providing continuous eligibility for children , birth to 21, who can achieve better health outcomes with routine and dependable primary care coverage.

Additional Investment in School Based Clinics: An additional barrier to accessing health care can be the ability of a parent to take off work to transport children to care. By expanding school-based clinics, children are able access primary care in in locations familiar to them. This investment will support positive health outcomes for all children.

MNACHC also appreciates the following provisions that will **support FQHCs:**

Thank you for including the **pharmaceutical dispensing fees** in addition to the fee-for-service pharmacy payment for FQHC pharmacy services. This payment will help financially sustain the availability of in-house pharmacy services and access at FQHCs.

We also thank you for including grants to **support workforce safety**. Safety issues at FQHCs are increasingly a concern as we ensure a safe space for patients and staff alike. The cost to keeping health centers staff and patients safe has been a significant financial strain for FQHCs.

Thank you so much for your consideration and your continued work and dedication to this process.

Always,



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