

2/26/2023

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on SF 1969. We are a group of consumer advocates including AARP, Legal Aid, The Alzheimer's Association of Minnesota/North Dakota, and the Minnesota Elder Justice Center. Together we have fought for the development of an Assisted Living license with meaningful protections for Minnesota residents. These standards did not arrive in a vacuum and were a direct response to unacceptable conditions in many assisted living programs.

The 144G license is important but it's also relatively new. In some cases, tweaks may be necessary to ensure that Assisted Living Licensure is workable for providers and that residents are receiving the care they deserve. There are some provisions in SF 1969 that we are open to considering. For larger organizations operating multiple facilities, it may be unnecessary for staff to retake the same orientation training when they move from facility to another. Providing additional flexibility around the certified food protection manager also makes sense in many situations. We are also willing to consider easing food safety codes around popcorn ceilings and shatterproof lightbulbs for smaller providers operating in residential homes.

However, there are some provisions in this legislation that warrant further discussion. We are concerned that this legislation limits resident choice and forces them to pay for a meal plan through the Assisted Living facility, even if they would rather prepare their own food or work with another provider. Additional explanation will be necessary to justify limiting the use of individual abuse prevention plans for residents receiving services at an Assisted Living Program and not everyone living at the facility. We also need additional context before raising the cap on building code standards for small providers from 6 to 16 residents. Finally, we do have questions about loosening the standards around the 90-day assessments of residents. We appreciate the workforce challenges facing assisted living providers, but maintaining high standards on routine assessments are necessary to ensure that residents are receiving appropriate care.

We look forward to working with the Long-Term Care Imperative to find the right balance on the 144G license around these issues. We are happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association, AARP, Legal Aid, and the Minnesota Elder Justice Center