

March 15, 2023

Re:SF2244 (Maye Quade)/HF2523 (Fischer)

Dear Chair Hoffman and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to share Minnesota Social Service Association's support of SF2244 which would provide much a much-needed investment in the Senior Nutrition Program. The Minnesota Social Service Association (MSSA) is made up of over 4,000 health and human service professionals statewide. Our members cover the health and human service spectrum —mental health providers, social workers, case managers, etc. —and are employed by for-profit and non-profit entities, as well as state and local government agencies. Many of our members work with older adults who rely on the State's Senior Nutrition program to meet their dietary needs. Meals for older adults are seriously underfunded in Minnesota and, as a result, the health of older Minnesotans is at risk.

Many older adults are at risk for malnutrition. Malnutrition increases the risk of illness, results in longer hospital stays, and high levels of readmissions. Lack of access to regular, nutritious meals is a critical component in preventing malnutrition. Minnesota's Senior Nutrition program is a critical support for older adults to provide them with the nutritious meals they need. However, this program hasn't seen an increase in over 20 years. With the rising population of older adults, the need for meals has grown. Additionally, costs of meals have increased significantly due to inflation over time. These issues disproportionately affect those who are lower-income, those in rural communities who may live in food deserts, older adults with limited English proficiency, and older adults with lack access to transportation.

SF2244 will help mitigate these issues by providing funding for the Senior Nutrition Program. We urge you to support this important bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support on behalf of our members and the clients they serve. Please reach out to us with questions, comments, or concerns at msancartier@mnssa.org.

Sincerely,

Michelle SanCartier
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MSSA Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

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