

March 27, 2023

Re: SF1489(Boldon)/HF1494(Frederick)

Chair Hoffman and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

We thank you for the opportunity to share our support for SF1489/HF1494 which would establish a grant to help ensure health and human services (HHS) provider safety. This bill would help address a critical component of HHS provider burnout and the workforce shortage by providing human services agencies with the resources they need to ensure the safety of their employees.

Among human services professionals, workplace safety needs have never been greater. HHS providers are more likely to experience workplace safety incidents than those in other fields. HHS providers experience over 70% of all reported workplace safety incidents, but as many as 85% may not be reported. Workplace safety incidents have dramatically increased over the last decade and during the pandemic, and are a contributing factor to burnout. Professionals who have experienced safety incidents often report that unsafe situations are normalized in human services settings and accepted as a part of the profession.

HF1494/SF1489 would authorize the Minnesota Department of Human Services to award grants to HHS organizations to invest in workplace safety measures. Grants would be used, at an agency's discretion, to pay for safety equipment, systems to track, monitor & prevent violence, training, support, and follow-up services. The grant will also help collect data to determine meaningful future policy changes.

Importantly, this bill includes important safeguards to ensure client rights and protections. It does not include penalties or criminal charges against any client, patient, agency, or provider and does not enforce or endorse new safety measures that are not already in use.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support on behalf of our organizations and the clients we serve.

Sincerely,

Agate Housing and Services
Aitkin County Health and Human Services
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Ampersand Families
Beacon Specialized Living MN
BeechWood, Inc.
Bemidji State University- Social Work Department
Bellis
Bestview Care Options

Carlton County Public Health & Human Services
Carver County Health and Human Services
Catholic Charities Twin Cities
Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato
Family Pathways
Guild Services
Haven Housing
Heartland Girls' Ranch
Isanti County Health and Human Services
Kanabec County Family Services
Lac qui Parle County Family Services
Laura Baker Services Association
Mayo Clinic
McLeod County Health & Human Services
Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health
Minnesota Children's Alliance
Minnesota Social Service Association
Model Cities of St. Paul Inc.
Morrison County Health and Human Services
Nobles County Community Services
North Homes Children and Family Services
Northeast Youth and Family Services
Oak Tree Support Services
POR Emotional Wellness
Reach for Resources, Inc.
Renville County Human Services
Social Work Department, Metro State University
SpringPath Mental Health
St. Catherine University-Department of Social Work
The Salvation Army Northern Division
Thomas Allen
Thrive Behavioral Network LLC
Valley Outreach
Village Ranch Inc.
Wellcome Manor Family Services
Wright County Health & Human Services
Yellow Medicine County Family Service Center