



March 12, 2024

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, representing 6,300 employers and their more than 500,000 employees across the state, I am writing to share our concerns about the bills under consideration today, SF 4444 (Port), 4064 (Bolden), and SF 4382 (Kupec).

Individually and collectively, these bills would place significant new burdens on Minnesota's hospitals and health systems, which have been operating for many years under extremely challenging circumstances. These bills would significantly limit hospitals' ability to respond to patient care needs by undercutting staffing decisions, requiring the creation and staffing of positions that may not align with the needs of a hospital and its patients, and requiring hospitals to make decisions about operations and service offerings well before the financial and staffing data used to support such decisions can be known.

Taken together, these bills would:

- Allow patient care staff to circumvent hospital staffing and care management plans and current whistleblower protections and processes by independently and unilaterally deciding not to accept a patient assignment (SF 4444);
- Require all hospitals to hire dedicated staff to respond to behavioral health crises, regardless of the hospital's size or case mix, putting additional strain on hospitals' efforts to fulfill its workforce needs and further challenging their efforts to direct scarce resources to patient care (SF 4064); and
- Further restrict a hospital's ability to respond in a timely manner to challenges it may face in its finances or its workforce needs by adjusting, altering, or halting service offerings (SF 4382).

Each of these bills represents an effort to address very real challenges. But the solutions proposed in these bills will take away flexibility that hospitals need to fulfill their responsibilities to address these challenges while also meeting the needs of the patients they serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bentley Graves', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Bentley Graves

Director, Health Care & Transportation Policy

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