

April 17, 2024

Sen. Melissa Wiklund
Room 2107, Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity to ask for your support on various provisions to include in the health and human services omnibus budget bill. Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity is a statewide coalition of health professionals working toward health equity for all Minnesotans. We believe everyone deserves to live a healthy life, regardless of their race, gender, age, income, or neighborhood.

Please include **SF 3532** to modify prior authorization requirements that will improve access to critical health care services and **SF 2209** which provides health coverage of gender-affirming care for Minnesotans. Accessibility to health services is critical to closing health inequities. Barriers to coverage contribute to disparate health outcomes and we strongly believe both bills will improve access and health outcomes.

We urge you to also include **SF 3969**, which requires the commissioner of human services to apply for a section 1115 demonstration waiver for Health-Related Social Needs. This would allow Minnesota to provide medically appropriate nutritional and housing support as covered services under Medical Assistance (MA). Expanding access to food and housing supports for Minnesotans is a critical part of whole-person care and would make a significant positive impact on the health of our communities and reduce health disparities.

Lastly, while **SF 3509**, legislation that would provide medical assistance coverage to incarcerated individuals prior to reentry to the community, and **SF 3466**, establishing continuous MA eligibility for adults, did not receive hearings this year, we believe this legislation to be fundamental to future conversations around health equity. These bills are important steps toward removing barriers to quality health care and providing stability and security for families.

We respectfully ask for your support of these legislative proposals that will make a difference to eliminate inequities that exist to create a healthier, brighter future for Minnesotans. Thank you for your service and dedication to serving our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cuong Pham', with a stylized, cursive script.

Cuong Pham, MD
President, Minnesota Doctors for Health Equity, Contact: pham0079@umn.edu