

April 17, 2024

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 210
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: MinnesotaCare Public Option (SF4699, Article 3)

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

For years, Minnesotans across different races, backgrounds, and geographies have come together to support a MinnesotaCare Public Option that allows more people to access high-quality, affordable healthcare. We believe that all Minnesotans deserve affordable healthcare, and that our government is responsible for making healthcare work for everyone.

In 2023, the Legislature took a critical step forward to advancing a MinnesotaCare Public Option, acknowledging that the current status quo that leaves thousands of Minnesotans on the individual market in high-deductible health plans that are too expensive to use is unacceptable. Action last year directed the Department of Commerce to conduct an actuarial analysis and report that it provided to the Legislature in February so additional legislative action could be taken in 2024.

We write to express our strong support for policy provisions included in the Senate Health Omnibus bill (SF4699) that advances the work to secure federal authorization and funding for the MinnesotaCare Public Option. Minnesotans have made it clear that expanding access to trusted, affordable public health insurance is a priority and provisions in this bill ensure progress is made without delay.

By directing state agencies to submit a federal waiver application for the MinnesotaCare Public Option, the state can complete analysis work and the application process can inform future legislation, implementation, and funding for the program. This work is foundational to the establishment of the MinnesotaCare Public Option and can begin before state funding commitments are made to the program.

We urge lawmakers to pass the MinnesotaCare Public Option policy provisions included in this omnibus bill, and continue swift action toward a historic healthcare expansion that thousands of Minnesotans are waiting for.

Signed,

AFSCME Council 5

AFSCME Council 65

Committee to Protect Health Care

Education Minnesota

ISAIAH

Minnesota Farmers Union

Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota Action Fund

SEIU Healthcare MN & IA

Unidos MN

