

Midwest Association for Medical Equipment Services & Supplies

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Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee

The Honorable Matt D. Klein, Chair

The Honorable Judy Seeberger, Vice Chair

RE: Written Testimony In support– SF 974 Health insurance plans, medical assistance and MinnesotaCare coverage of power standing systems for wheelchairs requirement

Dear Chair Klein and Vice Chair Seeberger,

The Midwest Association for Medical Equipment Services & Supplies (MAMES) is an 8-state regional association that represents durable medical equipment (DME) providers, manufacturers, and other stakeholders in the homecare communities in Minnesota, and 7 others states in the Midwest: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Our members include manufacturers and providers of power wheelchairs, often referred to as complex rehab technology or CRT. Our CRT provider members provide customized CRT manual and power wheelchairs and related services to consumers with complex medical needs. Our members are proud to be part of the continuum of care that assures individuals receive cost effective, safe, and reliable home care items and services.

MAMES is providing this written testimony in support of SF 974, a bill for an act relating to health insurance; requiring health plans to cover power standing systems for wheelchairs; requiring the commissioner of commerce to defray the cost of coverage of power standing systems; requiring coverage of power standing systems for wheelchairs in medical assistance and MinnesotaCare; appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 256B.0625, by adding a subdivision; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 62Q.

Providing power standing systems in wheelchairs greatly enhances the health, function, and quality of life for individuals with serious mobility disabilities such as spinal cord injury, paralysis, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, muscular dystrophy, and other related conditions. For those who sit for most of the day, standing and bearing weight on the lower limbs helps with metabolic functions and daily mobility activities.

For the last several years, stakeholders such as [The ITEM Coalition](#) that is comprised of nearly 100 national organizations that seek to improve access to and coverage of assistive devices and technologies that enhance the function of individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions of all ages—has long advocated for coverage of standing systems in power wheelchairs.

Health insurance coverage frequently fails to fully cover the cost of power standing systems for wheelchairs. Consequently, individuals seeking the medical and functional benefits of standing often have to pay out of pocket. If they lack the necessary financial resources, they are unable to access this technology. This situation diminishes their quality of life and may negatively impact their long-term health prospects.

MAMES commends Minnesota for advancing coverage for health insurances to cover this transformative technology. Please do not hesitate to contact the MAMES office, contact information above, for further support from our CRT members to advance SF 974.

The Midwest Association for Medical Equipment Services (MAMES) mission is a premier Association of Home Medical Equipment providers unified by education, advocacy, and collaboration. MAMES represents nearly 300 providers, manufacturers, and service representatives.