



January 27, 2025

To the Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my written statement of support. My name is Morgan Litzau, a Licensed School Nurse serving the Southwest West Central Service Cooperative and I am here to provide strong support of the proposed changes to Minnesota Statutes 2024, Section 124D.901, Subdivision 4. These changes are crucial in expanding the allowable uses of student support personnel aid, particularly for health services, which directly impact the safety, well-being, and academic success of our students.

As a Licensed School Nurse, I can speak firsthand to the increasingly complex needs of students in our schools today. From managing chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes, addressing mental health concerns, administering medications, providing emergency care, to supporting students dealing with the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, the role of the school nurse has become more integral than ever.

The expansion of allowable uses for student support personnel aid to cover transportation costs is particularly beneficial for school nurses. In rural areas, where districts may have multiple schools spread out over large geographic areas, school nurses may be required to travel between schools to provide care. Without funding for transportation, the cost and logistics of traveling could prevent nurses from being able to serve multiple schools effectively.

With transportation coverage, school nurses can travel between schools, provide necessary care, and attend to students' needs without the logistical burden of high transportation costs. This ensures that all students, regardless of location, receive the health services they need.

This expansion will also provide aid for personnel training. For nurses, this means more opportunities to stay up-to-date on the latest best practices, medical protocols, and mental health support strategies. Continuous training is critical for nurses to effectively respond to health issues, especially in an evolving landscape that includes increasing mental health concerns among students. Access to professional development ensures that school nurses can provide the highest level of care to students, which is essential for their academic and social success.

The role of the school nurse extends beyond physical health and includes mental health support. With increasing numbers of students experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges, school nurses are often the first line of defense. The bill's flexibility in using aid for contracted services, including mental health professionals such as counselors and social workers, ensures that school nurses can collaborate with other professionals to provide comprehensive

support for students' health and well-being. This collaborative approach is essential to meet the growing mental health needs in schools.

I urge the committee to support this bill and its changes to expand the uses of student support personnel aid. Doing so will allow us to better meet the complex health needs of our students and ensure that all children can learn in a safe, supportive, and healthy environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Litzau BSN, RN, PHN, LSN