

March 12, 2025

Chair Melissa H. Wiklund
2107 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wilund and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee:

OutFront Minnesota, the state's largest LGBTQ+ advocacy organization, writes in support of SF1385. Founded in 1987, OutFront Minnesota has sought to build power within Minnesota's LGBTQ+ communities and address inequities through intersectional organizing, advocacy, education, and direct support services. We believe that SF1385, by providing funding for HIV services and programs, ensures access to necessary quality healthcare for people living with HIV including those who are from underrepresented populations.

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, as of 2023, there were 9,996 people living with HIV, with an estimated 1,100 more people believed to be living with undiagnosed HIV. In addition, there were 324 new cases of diagnosed people living with HIV, and two-thirds (66%) are from communities of color. These 324 new cases of HIV is a 24% increase from 2022, and it is the largest number of HIV cases in the last decade.¹

HIV, despite many medical advancements and resources, is still a matter of significant policy and public health importance. And, within the LGBTQ+ community, HIV remains a barrier for accessing quality healthcare and is used as a discriminating factor when seeking long-term care and housing. And, since HIV disproportionately affects communities of color, it creates additional challenges for individuals and families. That is why SF1385 is vital to helping people living with HIV, particularly those in the LGBTQ+ community, maintain the dignity and access to quality healthcare that they deserve.

OutFront Minnesota stands in support of SF1385 and we encourage your committee to vote YES on SF1385. The time is now to ensure that *all* Minnesotans, especially underrepresented populations, have access to necessary quality HIV healthcare services and programs in Minnesota; and, the passage of SF1385 will ensure that happens.

Sincerely,

Kat Rohn
Executive Director

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<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/hiv/stats/2023/index.html#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20there%20were%20324%20Outbreak%20Response%20and%20Case%20Counts.>