

Minnesota Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

**Minnesota Chapter of the
American Academy of
Pediatrics**

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March 26, 2025

Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave West
St Paul, MN 55103

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the over 1,000 members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP), thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on aspects of SF 2669, the Governor's proposed Health and Human Services budget.

MNAAP is very supportive of the allocation of \$1.3 million to address infectious disease prevention, response, and outbreak control. Unfortunately, Minnesota has some of the weakest childhood vaccination requirements in the country, and is particularly vulnerable to the spread of infectious disease and the possibility of preventable disease outbreaks, as seen in other states. If legislators are unwilling to strengthen the state's childhood vaccine requirements, MNAAP strongly encourages legislators to allocate funds to preparing to manage likely future outbreaks of infectious disease.

Our chapter is disappointed that the Department of Human Services (DHS) recommendation to increase Medical Assistance (MA) reimbursement rates for outpatient physician and community mental health services was not included in the Governor's recommendation. The 2024 DHS study found that these payment rates have fallen too far behind and recommended raising them to 100% of Medicare. Per DHS data, approximately one in four Minnesotans rely on MA for their healthcare and more than 4 in 10 babies born in Minnesota are covered by MA. The number of patients relying on MA for care has increased in recent years, and if the legislature is unwilling to raise these rates while this number continues to climb, it will likely result in severe access issues for approximately 1.4 million patients. This includes many of our patients – Minnesota's children – who will disproportionately experience decreased access to pediatric services if MA rates are not increased. This is a severe health inequity that will disproportionately affect children who live in rural or traditionally underserved areas, and will lead to worse health outcomes and ultimately higher healthcare costs for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on SF 2669.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Smentek".

Katie Smentek, MD

President, Minnesota Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics