



April 1, 2025
Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota and the Children's Health Network, we are writing in support of SF2670 which would establish a sustainable rate for Medical Assistance coverage for home-based phototherapy services to treat newborn jaundice.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric health care system and nearly 50 percent of the services we provide are to families that rely on Medicaid. In partnership with the Children's Health Network, we care for more than 7,000 newborns each year.

Newborn jaundice (hyperbilirubinemia) impacts about 60 percent of full term newborns and 80 percent of premature babies, but only 2-6 percent of all infants require treatment. For those infants, treatment is critical to preventing more serious health issues like brain damage or other neurological conditions. Phototherapy is the most common form of treatment for this condition and involves exposing the baby's skin to a specific wavelength of light. Studies have shown that phototherapy, when provided at home, is as safe and effective as inpatient treatment when families have the proper equipment and clinical support. Home-based treatment has also been shown to improve outcomes for infants by supporting parents' ability to continuously care for and interact with their child, enhance bonding and support opportunities for breastfeeding. This is why we have made phototherapy treatment for newborn jaundice a part of our home care program.

Unfortunately, providing this service is proving to be more and more difficult because of the costs associated with accessing home phototherapy equipment. If families can't access care at home, then their child must be admitted to the hospital, which is more than ten times the cost of at home care. Requiring Medical Assistance to cover this service at a sustainable rate is critical to our ability to continue to offer home-based phototherapy services to our patients and we hope to count on your support.

Sincerely,

Gigi Chawla, MD, MHA
VP and Chief of General Pediatrics
Children's Minnesota

Steven Inman, MD
Medical Director
Children's Health Network