

# open arms

Chairs and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lisa Lane, and I represent Open Arms of Minnesota.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SF2669 omnibus bill, and specifically the prepared meals grant program. Special thank you to the Chairs for including the prepared meals grant program in the omnibus bill.

For almost 40 years, Open Arms has been preparing and delivering medically tailored meals to vulnerable, sick and food insecure Minnesotans. We prepare over one million meals per year in our metro area kitchens, and we deliver and ship those meals to thousands of Minnesotans in the metro area AND in rural counties who are both food insecure and living with life threatening illnesses like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and renal failure or they are struggling with high risk pregnancies and trying to ensure a healthy deliveries and healthy newborns.

**The grant we received last year enabled us to ship 24,000 meals in the past year to 109 Open Arms clients across Greater Minnesota and provide 1,000 meals weekly to M Health Fairview patients who are also both food insecure and critically ill.**

**All of the clients served by the prepared meals grant program are more than 200% below the federal poverty guidelines, clients are made up of individuals who are individuals who are either unhoused, regularly sleep at homeless shelters, live in remote rural areas and unreliable transportation or they are referred to us directly from healthcare providers ranging from the Mayo clinic to Duluth. Our shipped meals are their only option for the kind of nutrition necessary for their illnesses.**

Current data from Minnesota hospitals reveals the substantial burden of food insecurity among critically ill individuals in Minnesota is particularly acute:

- 67% of critically ill patients in Minnesota report food insecurity during treatment
- 82% of cancer patients experience nutritional challenges during treatment
- Approximately 28,000 Minnesotans undergoing active cancer treatment struggle with meal preparation

- 73% of critically ill patients report missing meals due to lack of energy to prepare food
- Medical facilities report a 45% readmission rate for critically ill patients who lack adequate nutrition support
- 89% of healthcare providers indicate that proper nutrition through prepared meals could reduce treatment complications

Inclusion and support of the prepared meals grant program in the omnibus bill positively impacts vulnerable, critically ill and food insecure Minnesotans by ensuring they have access to nutritious food, which significantly improves their malnourishment scores, treatment outcomes and recovery processes.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of the prepared meals grant program by including it in the omnibus bill and thank you for your support.