

HENNEPIN COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 24, 2025

Senator John Hoffman
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
2111 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hoffman and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

Hennepin County is writing in support of SF2598 (Abeler), which would authorize abbreviated annual reassessments for individuals receiving disability waiver services. With the growth in need, it's imperative that we find greater efficiencies for administrative requirements while maintaining program integrity and mitigating impact to people who need our services.

Hennepin County's mission is to serve residents through transformative services that reduce disparities, eliminate inequities, and create opportunity for all. Our vision is a community where all people are healthy, all people are valued, and all people thrive. People with disabilities and seniors are vital members of our community and programs like Minnesota's home and community-based waivers and Community First Services and Supports are integral to supporting the ability to live the lives they choose in the most integrated manner.

Hennepin County Human Services provides supports to a diverse community with many and varying needs. Our Long Term Services and Supports team completes MnCHOICES assessments and provides access to important services. We have experienced a growth in community need year after year. This has resulted in people waiting months for initial MnCHOICES assessments as well as an increased need in annual reassessments for continuity of services.

The efficiencies do not exist purely at the local level or working faster and working harder. We recognize we've worked together to make improvements over the years and there are still many opportunities for systemic improvements. While not the only solution needed to clear the current backlogs for assessments, MnCHOICES efficiencies are critical. We along

with other counties continue engaging with stakeholders and the Department of Human Services to identify areas of alignment for policy, administrative, and system changes.

This is important to the people we serve. Without significant changes to the current system the people who rely on home and community-based services are at risk of not receiving the support they need. This includes the likelihood of further increased wait times for initial assessment and losing the continuity of services if an annual assessment is unable to be completed in time. It's also important to solidify a future of a quality and more financially sustainable system.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Irene Fernando". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Irene" and last name "Fernando" clearly distinguishable.

Irene Fernando