MINNESOTA SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the Minnesota Speech-Language Hearing Association (MnSHA), we write in support of SF1101, which would require coverage of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems and related habilitation services under Minnesota public health programs.

Communication is a basic human need. For many Minnesotans living with speech conditions, AAC systems are not optional tools they are essential to expressing needs, participating in school or work, engaging with family, and living with dignity. Devices such as speech-generating tablets, communication applications, and other assistive technologies make it possible for individuals with significant speech-language impairments to connect with the world around them.

Unfortunately, inconsistent coverage policies, limits on services, and barriers to repair or replacement can interrupt or worse, completely deny access to these systems. When a device breaks or coverage is delayed, a person can effectively lose their voice. SF1101 helps ensure medically necessary AAC systems and related habilitation services are covered in a fair and consistent manner, without separate financial barriers or arbitrary limits.

Speech-language pathologists work directly with individuals and families to evaluate, recommend, and support the use of AAC systems. We see firsthand the life-changing impact these tools have by improving independence, educational outcomes, health, and overall quality of life.

We respectfully ask the committee to support SF1101 to ensure that Minnesotans who rely on augmentative and alternative communication have reliable access to the systems and services they need.

Sincerely,

Laurie Stein
President
Minnesota Speech-Language Hearing Association