



April 7, 2021

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Representative Jen Schultz, Chair
Human Services Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Chair Schultz and Members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

With 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the largest voice for professional nursing in the State of Minnesota. As leaders in labor and health care, we are a voice for nurses around the state on issues related to public health and uplifting the experiences of workers.

MNA nurses care for patients at the bedside of 80% of hospitals in Minnesota and approximately 800 nurses who work for the state. MNA nurses have provided a steady presence throughout this pandemic, caring for patients experiencing the devastating and isolating impacts of the virus.

We are grateful for the inclusion of funding for the Essential Worker Emergency Leave Act.

Nurses, caregivers, and many other essential workers have kept Minnesotans safe and healthy while ensuring stability in our economy during this unprecedented time – and they have done so while putting their health and safety at risk.

When the federal government began enacting a series of policies to ensure Americans had access to emergency COVID leave, they left out employees who work for large businesses and specifically exempted health care workers and first responders. As a result, many essential workers have been forced to use their PTO, dip into their retirement, or even go without pay in order to quarantine to keep the public safe, care for a loved one diagnosed with COVID, or parent a child who does not have access to in-person school or childcare.

Nurses who work for the state of Minnesota in Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) facilities were encouraged to access the state provide emergency COVID leave. However, for nurses working in some of the most intense settings in Minnesota, they unexpectedly faced denials for their leave requests. Our state nurses do invaluable work caring for some of the most vulnerable patients in demanding conditions. We must make sure that they too are able to take the necessary time when impacted by COVID.

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AFL-CIO

The Essential Workers Emergency Leave Act will ensure that frontline health workers have the financial security to continue caring for Minnesotans and its inclusion in HF 2127 will ensure that all frontline workers are able to access this relief.

Additionally, we appreciate the operating adjustment for Direct Care and Treatment (DCT). Nurses in DCT facilities often report to work in understaffed settings with vulnerable patient populations. Additional resources for DCT will provide additional support for MNA nurses.

Thank you and we urge committee members to support HF 2127.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary C. Turner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mary C. Turner
President and RN
Minnesota Nurses Association

