



April 4th, 2024

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Chair Liebling
MN House Health Finance and Policy
Minnesota State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Liebling and committee members,

With 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading voice for professional nursing in the State of Minnesota. As leaders in labor and health care, we are a voice for frontline hospital nurses around the state who strongly support evidence-based health policy that enables patients to access healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, gender affirming care, and regulating health maintenance organizations (HMO) conversions.

Support for HF4853: HMO transaction oversight

H.F. 4853 is a much-needed piece of legislation that targets the largest contributors to rising patient costs, barriers to accessing the medically necessary services (or services at all), and blatant profiteering off the backs of patients and taxpayers. Profit-driven behaviors and motivations should not be the guiding force behind the policies and practices that guide HMOs, something that Legislature at least partially recognized across the aisle in the past when the current HMO conversion moratorium became law.

Until the Legislature takes the additional steps laid out in H.F. 4853 to prohibit for-profit entities from accessing public assets when converting to for-profits, this is an issue that will continue to come before this committee and the risks and current problems will remain. Notably, there is little stopping the private health insurance companies – who are currently sitting on almost \$6 billion in assets, including many charitable assets they have acquired from nonprofit entities at a fraction of their actual value – from furthering their monopolization of our healthcare system. This bill takes us forward by protecting our state's assets, better regulating charitable assets, and preventing harmful profit-based takeovers that seem inevitable under current law.

Support for HF4053: Health plan coverage of abortion and related services

We know that most Minnesotans support access to full reproductive healthcare options and for individuals to have autonomy over medical decisions affecting them. MNA's own stance reflects support of this position as well. Unfortunately, there are many laws in place that prevent full access to healthcare and the overturning of Roe v. Wade led to a flood of cruel and harmful laws attacking not only abortion rights. MNA is proud to see the work that the Minnesota legislature completed last year and we applaud the continued work to ensure everyone has access to the full scope of healthcare services, including abortion care.

Patients should not have to face financial repercussions for accessing abortion care nor should providers struggle through a mess of complicated funding options and barriers to receiving payment. Healthcare should be affordable and accessible. H.F. 4053 is an

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important step toward changing this and ensuring more people can access the care they need.

Nurses see the results of these policies that restrict access regularly in their own profession. Barriers often result in more serious healthcare issues which burden our already understaffed emergency departments and hospitals. It's important to provide coverage for people of all economic status.

Support for HF2607 Health plans clarified to require coverage of gender-affirming care

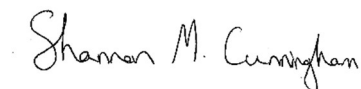
Minnesota nurses firmly stand with all transgender, gender non-binary, and gender non-conforming people. We strongly oppose all state and federal legislative efforts that impair the human rights of transgender people, including those that limit transgender people's access to gender-affirming healthcare, school activities, employment, and public facilities. And we fully support creating systems to ensure more access and affordability for these lifesaving and life changing healthcare services.

Studies show that access to gender affirming care mitigates negative mental health outcomes and reduces the rates of moderate to severe depression. A study published in *Jama* found that "having access to hormones and puberty blockers for youth ages 13 to 20 was associated with a 60% lower odds of moderate to severe depression and a 73% lower odds of self-harm or suicidal thoughts compared to youth who did not receive these medications over a 12-month period." This is a huge difference in the lives of Minnesotans and many more studies show additional benefits for providing access to gender affirming care.

Knowing that access to gender affirming care can greatly improve lives and save lives, it's easy to see that everyone should have access to affordable and accessible gender affirming healthcare. HF 2607 is an important step towards this. Now is the time for Minnesota to remove these barriers to care and ensure that we continue to be a leader in providing equitable healthcare, access, and support for those in need. For the health, safety, and economic well-being of patients across the state, we urge you to support HF 2607.

We applaud the bill authors on all of these important pieces of legislation and strongly encourage you to support these important changes to healthcare coverage and regulation.

Thank you,



Shannon M. Cunningham
Director of Governmental and Community Relations
Minnesota Nurses Association