

February 13, 2017

Representative Joe Schomacker
509 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: House File 823

Dear Representative Schomacker,

On behalf of more than 660,000 members, AARP Minnesota would like to lend our support for your bill, House File 823 that increases investments and strengthens the Elderly Waiver Program for Older Adults in Minnesota. The Elderly Waiver (EW) program is a critical Medical Assistance program and has been successful in helping many seniors live independently in their home. Living in one's home or community for as long as possible is the preference for over 90% of older adults.

AARP also supports the addition of performance measures for elderly customized living or what is commonly referred to as Assisted Living Facilities. These measures include a customer satisfaction survey, citations from the Department of Health home survey, home care staff retention, and staff training. While it is not clear how the survey data would be released, **AARP would urge that the consumer experience survey results be publicly disclosed**, while safeguarding the privacy of individuals, so consumers have more tools to evaluate Assisted Living Facilities for quality care.

Additionally, by increasing investments in the Elderly Waiver Program, providers can recruit and retain a quality long term care workforce which is essential as the population ages and the labor market tightens. Moreover, this legislation begins addressing ways to reform the program including ways to incent quality, improve outcomes, and focus on person-centered care. The reforms directly related to the consumer that can improve care include:

- Temporary increases to living service rates to avoid hospitalization
- Nursing component services that can include injections, wound care and other critical services
- Addition of a customer satisfaction survey and performance measures.

As the population ages, AARP believes it is vital that we continue to improve access to home and community based alternatives that are more cost-effective than nursing home placements for long term services.

Thanks for your leadership on this important legislation. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Jo George, AARP's State Director of Advocacy at mgeorge@aarp.org.

Sincerely,



Will Phillips
State Director