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February 8, 2021

Representative Jennifer Schultz
 Chair, Human Services Finance & Policy Committee
 Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Support for H.F. 256 (Recuperative Care for People Experiencing Homelessness)

Chair Schultz and Members of the Committee:

I write to express Catholic Charities' support for H.F. 256, which directs DHS to request federal grant funds to establish Recuperative Care as a health home model under the Affordable Care Act. Such a model would better support individuals experiencing homelessness and in need of non-hospital recuperative care and services.

Catholic Charities is the region's largest comprehensive social service agency. We serve nearly 23,000 men, women, children and families every year across 18 sites and are focused on achieving and maintaining housing stability for those most in need. We provide more than 530,000 nights of housing and emergency shelter and serve more than 1.2 million meals annually. But we do not do this work alone.

Critical to the success of our mission to serve those most in need is the strength of broader systems, high-functioning public-private partnerships, and cross-sector collaboration. The recuperative care programs operated by Catholic Charities at Higher Ground Saint Paul and Exodus Residence in downtown Minneapolis are perhaps the most unique and innovative examples of this collaboration with hospitals and healthcare systems.

Higher Ground Saint Paul and Exodus Residence provide care for medically and psychiatrically complex individuals experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover without support but who do not require hospital-based care. In the two years prior to COVID-19, we served nearly 700 individuals at Higher Ground Saint Paul alone, leading to more than \$1 million in estimated annual cost savings and nearly 2,000 avoidable hospital days each year. The impact of recuperative care will only grow as we expand the program from 10 to at least 30 beds at Exodus 2.0 (name subject to change).

Recuperative care decreases emergency room visits and hospital readmissions, helps prevent the need for higher-cost components of medical care, and provides a safe place for people experiencing homelessness to heal. It is a concrete example of what can happen when our public, private and nonprofit sectors work together toward a common goal, but a statewide recuperative care program is needed to better serve more Minnesotans most in need across the state and to help alleviate strains on our health systems.

H.F. 256 is a necessary next step to grow and strengthen this life-saving partnership. We ask for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Laurie Ohmann'.

Laurie Ohmann, Chief Operating Officer
 Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Catholic Charities serves those most in need. We are a leader at solving poverty, creating opportunity, and advocating for justice in the community.