



February 9, 2014

Honorable Health & Human Service Reform Committee members,

The American Heart Association (MN) supports the CARE Act (SF107-Eken and HF210-Zerwas) which recognizes the critical role family caregivers play in keeping their loved ones out of costly institutions. Thousands of Minnesotans are caring for an aging parent or loved one, helping them to live independently in their own homes. Family caregivers perform a variety of caregiving duties such as wound care. But now with people living longer, the role of family caregivers has dramatically expanded to include performing more complex medical and nursing tasks such as IV therapy with little to no training. Because of the dramatic improvement in acute care in Minnesota, more and more Minnesotans are surviving Strokes and Heart Attacks and are in need of longer term care and rehabilitation. The CARE Act helps ensure that these caregivers have the information and resources they need to be successful.

The CARE Act features three important provisions that support family caregivers keep their loved ones safe at home:

1. The name of the family caregiver is recorded when a loved one is admitted into a hospital;
2. The family caregiver is notified if the loved one is to be discharged to another facility or back home; and,
3. The facility must provide an explanation and live instruction of the medical tasks that the family caregiver will perform at home.

Health care experts say caregiver training and engagement is vital to improving care transitions—when patients are discharged from the hospital—and preventing costly readmissions. Once a patient leaves the hospital, family caregivers are the front line of defense against costly hospital readmissions. The American Heart Association (MN) believes it is very important to support family caregivers as they work to safely help their loved ones live independently at homes.

Therefore, we support SF 107 & HF 210.

Sincerely,

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