

March 3, 2021

Minnesota Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Committee Members:

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing to support HF660, the "Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act" which provides resources to address structural racism in health care and address disparities in rates of maternal mortality and morbidity in Minnesota. In our state maternal death rates are 2.3 times higher for African American women and 4 times higher for Indigenous women when compared to their white counterparts.¹ These outcomes persist regardless of income and education level, and are unacceptable.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest provider of pediatric health care. Last year, we treated over 125,000 patients statewide. We serve a diverse community of patients and are acutely aware of the health disparities that exist within our community and the impact on children and families. In 2016 and 2019 Children's Minnesota named structural racism as one of our top health priorities in our [Community Health Needs Assessment \(CHNA\)](#). In response to what we learned in these assessments, we are making concerted efforts to address systemic issues within our own organization that contribute to structural racism. These efforts include, but are not limited to, integrating equity and inclusion into all operational goals, ensuring that our providers and executive leaders receive ongoing anti-racism and implicit bias training, diversifying our workforce, and reviewing internal policies to provide equitable care.

Our vision is to be every family's essential partner in raising healthier children and we can't do that without being supportive of mothers and the care they receive prior to and after giving birth. That is why The Mother Baby Center, a partnership between Allina Health and Children's Minnesota, is so valuable to us. We know that racism experienced by caregivers can affect a child's development and we believe that in order to truly address systemic racism in healthcare we must come together as an industry and create new strategies to address inequities.² I believe that the resources and requirements outlined in HF660 are an important part of this effort.

Sincerely,



Marc H. Gorelick, MD, MSCE
President & CEO
Children's Minnesota

¹ Minnesota Department of Health: Maternal Mortality

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/womeninfants/maternalmort/index.html>

² Harvard Center for the Developing Child: How Racism Can Affect Child Development

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/racism-and-ecd/>