

March 7, 2023

Re: HF2286

Chair Liebling and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HF2286 which among other provisions, would ensure 12-month continuous eligibility for all MAGI Medicaid enrollees and up to 72 months for children up to 6 years of age.

This Is Medicaid (TIM) is a diverse coalition of more than 50 nonpartisan organizations from across Minnesota partnering to protect and improve Medicaid. We seek measurable and positive outcomes for all Minnesotans – in particular, policies that improve the health outcomes of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities; address geographic, racial, and economic inequities; and promote health justice in Minnesota. TIM is committed to identifying opportunities to preserve and improve Minnesota’s Medicaid program, Medical Assistance, as we continue to grapple with the pandemic and the compounding health impacts it leaves in its wake. **We believe this proposal will help improve our system which will support Minnesotans as they recover and better serve them into the future.**

The public health emergency unwinding process is incredibly important and fraught. The U.S. Department of Human Services predicts that of the 15 million people nationally that may be determined ineligible for Medicaid during unwinding from the PHE continuous eligibility, ***nearly half* (45%, 6.8 million) will be *eligible to remain enrolled*, but will lose coverage due to a temporary loss of coverage in which enrollees disenroll and then re-enroll within a short period of time known as “churn”. This will disrupt their care until they reapply.**

Providing Minnesota DHS and navigators the necessary resources to do this job well is essential. Low-income adults, children and families, elderly, and disabled Minnesotans are all depending on the state to do our best. Going forward, we should not return to the ways of the past, where these same levels of churn existed, just spread out year after year. The federal Inflation Reduction Act passed in December requires Minnesota to finally join the 34 states that already offer 12-month continuous eligibility for youth under age 19 by January 2024.

Section 2 of this bill includes 12-month continuous eligibility for youth under 21, and 72-month CE for children up to age 6, so that as much as possible, when children and families are redetermined, they are subject to the new CE eligibility standards immediately.

Continuous eligibility would ensure young children who are enrolled in Medicaid have uninterrupted continuous coverage. Consistent access to medical care and check-ups improves children’s health outcomes, supports school readiness, supports health equity, and lowers administrative burdens on families. Continuous eligibility offers an off-ramp to adults transitioning to better paying jobs, supports whole family wellbeing, and stabilizes access to mental health care and critical medications for vulnerable adults. It also strengthens health equity -- people of color are at greater risk of losing Medicaid coverage for procedural reasons when the continuous coverage protection ends.

We encourage you to support the continuous eligibility provisions in this bill so they can be implemented as quickly as possible, and to support continuous eligibility for adults in HF2286 going forward. **We urge you to pass HF2286 to help ensure as many Minnesotans as possible are able to retain their coverage without harmful interruptions.** Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns at thisismedicaid@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Erin Sutton and Michelle SanCartier

This is Medicaid Co-Conveners

thisismedicaid@gmail.com