

Wednesday, February 28, 2024.

Re: H.F. 3643 - Improving Emergency Medical Assistance Coverage (EMA)

Dar Chair Noor and Vice Chair Bahner:

Unidos Minnesota is a multiracial state-wide organization building power for Minnesota working families to advance social, racial, and economic justice. We are an organization born out of the immigration justice movement. Immigration, education, climate justice, and healthcare are at the core of our work. Unidos Minnesota supports H.F. 3643, a bill addressing discharge barriers for Emergency Medical Assistance (EMA) recipients. This legislation will expand coverage to increase the number of suitable facilities available for patients to continue to heal and recover after a hospital stay.

At Unidos, our membership is clear that we must continue investing in a people-first approach to healthcare. We are grateful for the support received from members of this committee to pass the MNCare Immigrant Inclusion Act and the actuarial study to outline a Public Option. However, as we continue to work together this session, we must ensure that all communities are given an equal opportunity to regain and retain their health, in particular those patients who rely on EMA.

Every Minnesotan deserves high quality, continued care after a hospital stay. As we enter a third year of living with COVID-19, individuals and communities across Minnesota continue to experience rising disability rates as the long term health impacts of the virus continue to disrupt body systems. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, one in 18 Minnesota adults experience long COVID.¹ Minnesotans of color, American Indians, people with disabilities, those who live in rural or low-income areas, people in the LGBTQ community, or those who are homeless or have unstable housing are more likely to experience long COVID.² It is thus critical that we equip hospitals with the capacity to accommodate and match EMA recipients with an appropriate post-discharge facility.

¹ <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2023/04/14/one-in-18-minnesota-adults-experiencing-long-covid>

² <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/longcovid/about.html#impact>

We can always, collectively, do better, and this 2024 legislative session presents us with an opportunity to dismantle systemic barriers for all Minnesotans. We respectfully ask you to support H.F. 3643 to ensure that the patients who rely on EMA can recover from a hospital stay in a dignified manner. And we look forward to continuing our working relationship centering a model of co-governance.

Should you have any questions, please contact me or our Policy Director, Sara Lopez. Sara can be reached by email at sara@unidos-mn.org or by phone at (507) 581-4211.

Respectfully submitted,

Emilia Gonzales Avalos

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