March 25, 2022

Dear Chair Liebling, Vice Chair Huot, Lead Schomacker, and Committee Members,

I am a pediatrician writing on behalf of the MN Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Doctors for Early Childhood (the undersigned), an advocacy and education group. We are writing in support of HF 4398/SF 4014 – Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families Act.

Universal developmental and social emotional screening and follow up are key features of pediatric practice. We believe it is a right of all children and families. It is built into the Early and Periodic Screenings feature of Child and Teen Checkups and part of regular well child visits starting in the earliest months of life, and the Academy’s Medical Home program. We heartily endorse this feature of the Healthy Beginnings-Healthy Families Act. Early identification of children’s health conditions, development delays, and risks thereof is the surest path to better health and development. A child on a better path to health and development will make the most of his/her potential in all the years to come.

Another feature of the Act is the provision to support Help Me Connect. This will facilitate collaboration across sectors covering child health, early learning, and education, child welfare, and family supports. Pediatric practice and the medical home (Health Care Homes Program in Minnesota) has shown the value of care coordination, of which Help Me Connect is a robust example. The array of services available can be challenging to families. Efficient navigation to services needed will clear the path to a brighter future. It should be available to all Minnesota Children and their families.

We hope you will support HF4398/SF4014 in upcoming hearings. Minnesota’s children and families will be so much the better for your doing so.

Respectfully,

The Early Childhood Workgroup of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

and Doctors for Early Childhood

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