



April 7, 2022

Dear Chair Liebling and Members of the Committee:

The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities writes in strong support of **HF4706, Reducing Health Disparities Among People with Disabilities.**

The Council is composed of 25 members from all parts of Minnesota and 60% of our membership are either individuals with developmental disabilities or family members. If HF4706 is passed, we are very interested in participating with the Commissioner of MDH in identifying barriers, helping set priorities, and developing action plans to address gaps in services and resources.

Based upon our review of MDH plans and reports, people with disabilities are often missing from these important documents. It is time to address this equity issue.

People with disabilities have been differentially affected by COVID-19 because of three factors: the increased risk of poor outcomes from the disease itself, reduced access to routine health care and rehabilitation, and the adverse social impacts of efforts to mitigate the pandemic.

The WHO's *World Report on Disability* noted that people with disabilities were more likely to be older, poorer, experience comorbidities, and be female. Older age, deprivation, and comorbidities are also associated with increased risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

People with intellectual disabilities living in congregate residential settings, had a higher risk of death from COVID-19 than people without disabilities. But even in household settings, people with intellectual disability have an increased risk of COVID-19 death. The staff shortage has only exacerbated this issue. The Council strongly supports the funding proposed in HF4706

Please do not hesitate to contact our Council if we can be of assistance or answer any questions.

Cordially,

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