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Legal Services Advocacy Project

970 Raymond Avenue, Suite G-40

St. Paul, MN 55114

March 8, 2023

The Honorable Tina Liebling The Honorable Joe Schomacker

Chair, Health Finance & Policy Comm. Republican Lead, Health Finance & Policy Comm.

Minnesota House of Representatives Minnesota House of Representatives

477 State Office Building 209 State Office Building

St. Paul, MN 55155 St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 2599 – Screening of Patients for Charity and Other Program

Dear Chair Liebling, Lead Schomacker, and Members of the Taxes Committee:

Legal Aid writes to express its support for HF 2599, which would require hospitals to screen patients who are uninsured or whose insurance​ coverage status is unknown for: eligibility for charity care from the hospital, state or federal public health care programs, and a premium tax credit Legal Aid provides civil legal services to enable low-income Minnesotans, Minnesotans with disabilities, and elder Minnesotans to address legal problems impeding their ability to meet their basic needs. The Legal Services Advocacy Project, a statewide project of Legal Aid, provides legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of our clients and all low-income Minnesotans.

Too often, patients with limited means – including low-income clients of Legal Aid – are pressured into paying the high medical bill through high interest credit cards or hospital credit with interest or other unaffordable payment plans, which set the patient up for failure, debt woes, and stressful calls from collectors, when they may be eligible for assistance which provides payment for the medical care.

Further, requiring compliance with the Minnesota Attorney General’s Hospital Agreement ensures compliance with the consent decree – made necessary because of collection abuses – and ensures that every effort is made to connect the patient with eligible charity or public programs before turning the account over to traditional collections.

Thank you allowing Legal Aid to share its views in support of HF 2599. We urge its passage.

Sincerely,

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Ron Elwood

Supervising Attorney