

March 22, 2013

The Honorable Thomas Bakk
Majority Leader
Minnesota Senate
Capitol Room 226
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1605

The Honorable Paul Thissen
Speaker of the House
Minnesota House of Representatives
State Office Building Room 463
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1206

Dear Senate Majority Leader Bakk and Speaker Thissen,

We write to you today to express our disappointment, dismay and frustration. After a decade of compounding cuts to the Health and Human Services (HHS) budget, it is unfathomable that DFL leadership has set HHS targets that would cut another \$150 million from needed services for our most sick and vulnerable residents.

These budget targets are even more perplexing in light of \$2 billion of proposed new revenues and, more important, the fact that the HHS budget is one of the few areas with actual expenditures below projections in the February forecast.

Policymakers have repeatedly called for Health and Human Services to bear the brunt of solving the overall budget. Every time, Health and Human Services stakeholders have taken their hits. Compounding cuts, including last biennium's \$1.1 billion, have strained our organizations' ability to continue to provide the level of services Minnesotans need.

- Most recently, six health care provider organizations put themselves on the line by participating in the Health Care Delivery System demonstration project that is estimated to result in \$90 million in additional savings for the state. We are reforming health care and bending the cost curve and budget cuts at this time will unravel this reform.
- Long-term care providers have foregone cost of living increases and experienced significant reductions.
- The mental health system has long awaited investments for community services.
- Countless safety net programs designed to intervene early to avoid much costlier health and social services costs in the future have struggled to maintain needed services in the midst of constantly declining resources.
- Provider payment rates have been reduced or held flat year after year.

Now with Governor Dayton proposing to *increase* HHS spending by \$170 million, we are confronted by DFL legislative majorities proposing to *slash* \$150 million from the Health and Human Services budget while every other budget area receives increased funding or is held virtually harmless.

We ask you to change your budget targets before the real work of the budget committees begin.

Sincerely,

Please see the following list of undersigned organizations as of March 25.

cc: Senator Tony Lourey
Representative Tom Huntley

Minnesota Hospital Association

Apple Tree Dental

Arc Minnesota

Canvas Health

Catholic Health Association Minnesota

CentraCare Health System

Children’s Defense Fund – Minnesota

Children’s Dental Services

Community Involvement Programs

Courage Center

Essentia Health

Fairview Health Services

Fraser

GRACE House of Itasca County

Guild Incorporated

Hamm Memorial Psychiatric Clinic

Hennepin County Medical Center

Human Development Center

Long Term Care Imperative

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Mental Health Association of Minnesota

Mental Health Providers Association of Minnesota

Minnesota Association for Children’s Mental Health

Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children

Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers

Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, Inc.

Minnesota Child Care Association

Minnesota Coalition of Licensed Social Workers

Minnesota Community Action Partnership

Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies

Minnesota Dental Association

Minnesota Licensed Practical Nurses Association

Minnesota Medical Association

Minnesota Psychiatric Society

Minnesota Psychological Association

Minnesota Safety Net Coalition

Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance

Minnesota Society of Interventional Pain Physicians

NAMI Minnesota

National Association of Social Workers, Minnesota Chapter

North Memorial Medical Center

Northland Counseling Center

People Incorporated Mental Health Services

Portico Healthnet

R-80 Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Coalition

Range Mental Health Center

Sanford Health

South Central Human Relations Center

The Emily Program Foundation

Touchstone Mental Health

Vail Place

Woodland Centers

YWCA of Minneapolis