



1753 Cottonwood Circle • Saint Cloud, MN 56303 • www.machp.org

Rep. Liz Reyer
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Rep. Reyer,

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Association of County Health Plans (MACHP) to provide comments on your bill, H.F. 1934, that delays implementation of a single Medical Assistance dental administrator for four years and appoints a task force to more thoroughly consider the impacts and other ways to improve dental access. We support this delay in the interest of avoiding serious harm to our dental safety net providers and addressing what really leads to better MA dental access and utilization.

MACHP represents Minnesota's three county-based purchasing plans that administer public programs in 32 rural counties for about 80,000 enrollees. We value dental care and have made the commitment that our members receive care when they need it, for both routine and emergent care. This commitment includes paying the highest reimbursements to dentists in the State and funding dental clinics to assure regional access to care. Itasca Medical Care, PrimeWest Health and South Country Health Alliance have the highest dental access rates for public program enrollees in the State, higher than either PMAP plans, or fee-for-service dental programs administered by the Department of Human Services. They do this under the same capitation rate other managed care organizations receive by prioritizing spending to strengthen dental access.

H.F. 1934 modifies requirements for a single dental administrator, which would carve out dental benefits from other health plan benefits that our members administer. We understand and share your goal of assuring and increasing access to dental services. We are not convinced that moving to a single administrator will necessarily increase access to dental services, based on the experiences of other states, but recognize the critical need for improvements in access to dental services for patients throughout Minnesota.

We appreciate your amendment suggesting a more wholistic approach to strengthening MA dental access and delay of the effective date for implementation of a single administrator. This delay and formal task force will allow all stakeholders – dentists, including Critical Access Dentists, health plans, county-based purchasing plans, dental plan administrators, the Department of Human Services, enrollees and counties – to collaborate on how best to increase access to dental services. We support this process and appreciate that you have been a collaborative partner in working with us to understand our concerns. We look forward to continuing conversations with you to meet our shared goal of improved access and dental care for public program enrollees.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Gottwalt
Executive Director
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Cc: MACHP Board of Directors

IMCare
PrimeWest Health
South Country Health Alliance