

March 8, 2018

Representative Nick Zerwas
433 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Eric Pratt
3219 Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Zerwas and Senator Pratt:

We are writing today to provide our strong support for HF 3312/ SF 2975, and to thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

The Minnesota Health Records Act was passed in the 1980's, and has only had limited modifications since its initial passage. By contrast, health care and technology has changed dramatically since that time. Thirty years ago, virtually no one had a personal computer, medical records were paper charts, and patients remained with a primary care provider for the majority of their lifetime. Today, people have computers in their pockets, providers have adopted electronic medical records, patients change their providers more frequently, and they interact with a full complement of health professionals within primary care, specialty care, and community services.

Minnesota's health care system is now built upon a standard that presumes a patient's information cannot be shared. A consent to release information must be signed at the right location, at the right time, and for bi-directional exchange (for example, from primary care doctor to oncologist and back to primary care doctor). Unfortunately, this complexity means that patients often find that their information has not reached its intended destination in time. This results in anxiety, added stress, duplicative tests, rescheduled visits, and unnecessary delays to treatment. At best, this burden becomes a nuisance, but at worst, it can be life-threatening.

Technology and information go hand in hand: together, they are the keys to quality, best practices, and efficiencies in care delivery. Minnesota's unique requirements under the MHRA ultimately prevent our state's providers from truly leveraging IT capabilities, because custom rules require customized- and expensive- technology solutions. In addition, increasing the utility of health IT enables providers to cross their silos of expertise to coordinate care, and connect patients to appropriate services across the care continuum.

We hold a sacrosanct responsibility to safeguard patients' health information; however we must not confuse confidentiality with secrecy. We are providers, patients, clients, payers, and constituents who know that Minnesota can do better. Updating the MHRA to allow for the release of clinically appropriate information like treatment, payment, and healthcare operations strikes a careful balance between safeguarding patient privacy and executing patient-centered care. Again, thank you for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Allina Health
ALS Association Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota Chapter
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association, Midwest Chapter
Avera Health
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota
Catholic Charities
CentraCare Health, Amy Porwoll, CIO & V.P. Information Services
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
ClearWay Minnesota
Emergency Physicians Professional Association
Fairview Health Services
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare
HealthEast Care System
HealthPartners
Hennepin County
Hennepin County Public Health
Hennepin County Medical Center
Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement
Lakeview Hospital
Local Public Health Association
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota
Mayo Clinic
Medica
Medical Alley Association
Methodist Hospital
Metropolitan Health Plan
Midwest Association for Medical Equipment Services
Minnesota Ambulance Association
Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs
Minnesota Business Partnership
Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance
Care Providers of Minnesota, Toby Pearson, Vice President of Advocacy
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, Bentley Graves
Minnesota Chapter of the Academy of Emergency Physicians
Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
Minnesota Council of Health Plans
Minnesota Hospital Association
Minnesota Home Care Association
LeadingAge MN, Kari Thurlow, Senior Vice President of Advocacy

Minnesota Medical Association
Minnesota Medical Group Management Association
Minnesota Rural Health Association
North Memorial Health Care
Opportunity Partners
Pediatric Home Service
PreferredOne
Regions Hospital
Rural Health Care Association
Sanford Health
SEIU Healthcare
Southern Prairie Community Care, William Muenchow, Executive Director
Twin Cities Medical Society
UCare
University of Minnesota, Lori J. Ketola, Chief Health Information Compliance Officer, Academic Health
Center & Office of Health Sciences
University of Minnesota Physicians
Veteran Resilience Project
Volunteers of America, Minnesota & Wisconsin; Paula Hart, President & CEO