

May 16, 2020

Senate Majority Leader Gazelka
Senate Minority Leader Kent
Senate HHS Finance and Policy Chair Benson

Speaker of the House Hortman
House Majority Leader Winkler
House Minority Leader Daudt
House HHS Policy Chair Moran

Dear Senators and Representatives,

As Minnesota organizations committed to cancer prevention, access to cancer care, and supporting cancer patients and survivors, we are writing in support of language in the agreed upon health policy bill that would make sure any woman diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through a program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCDEP) has access to the treatment they need.

The CDC's NBCCDEP program helps low-income, uninsured, and under-insured women gain access to lifesaving screening programs for early detection of breast and cervical cancers. Uninsured and underinsured women have lower screening rates, resulting in a great risk of being diagnosed at a later, more advanced stage of the disease. Under federal law, any woman diagnosed with cancer through a NBCCDEP-funded program is eligible for Medicaid. Access to treatment and health care coverage is critical to surviving the disease. However, Minnesota's *Medical Assistance for Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act* (MABC) is written with the most restrictive wording and names the Minnesota Department of Health's *Sage Screening Program* as the only pathway to treatment coverage, leaving out any women screened through other CDC NBCCDEP funded programs

There are two CDC NBCCDEP-funded programs in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Health *Sage Screening Program*, which is funded jointly by the state and NBCCDEP, and the American Indian Cancer Foundation's *Screen Our Circle* Program. The *Screen Our Circle* program has the same eligibility requirements as the *Sage Screening Program* but does outreach for American Indian women in a targeted area. Because of the narrow wording of state statute, women screened and diagnosed through the AICAF *Screen Our Circle* program would not automatically be eligible for Medicaid coverage.

The language included in the health policy bill would update state statute to conform with federal law and allow any person diagnosed with cancer through a CDC NBCCDEP funded program to be automatically eligible for Medicaid coverage.

A recent survey from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) found that 50% of cancer patients and survivors have reported some impact to their health care due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **During this time of uncertainty, it is more important than ever that every Minnesotan facing a cancer diagnosis can access the cancer care they need. Breast and cervical cancer patients can't wait another legislative session to access the chemotherapy or radiation they need to survive the disease.**

We call on state lawmakers to pass the agreed upon health policy bill. Doing so will help to make sure more Minnesota women have access to the treatment they need as they face a breast or cervical cancer diagnosis.

Signed,

