



MN Alliance for Ethical Healthcare
Ensuring real care throughout life's journey

RE: Letter in Support of H.F. 2291
House Health Finance and Policy Committee
March 24, 2026
VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Alliance for Ethical Healthcare is committed to ensuring the best possible quality of life for patients dealing with serious illness and disease. With that in mind, we are writing in support of H.F. 2291, which would continue funding the Minnesota Palliative Care Advisory Council at \$44,000 a year.

In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature passed bipartisan legislation to establish a Palliative Care Advisory Council to promote better quality and access to specialized care that provides relief from the symptoms and stress of serious, chronic, or life-limiting illnesses. The 18-member council comprises professionals and individuals with expertise in palliative care delivery models and represents the entire state of Minnesota, a variety of care settings, as well as expertise in caring for patients of all ages.

The Council has developed legislative recommendations to assess access and limit barriers to palliative care in Minnesota. For example, a recent report discussed provider education and training, along with the development of a palliative care payment model in collaboration with the Department of Human Services. Its work continues to deliver results and should continue with your support.

While many think of palliative care only in terms of end-of-life, hospice-oriented care, its application and potential impact are much broader. Palliative care helps reduce the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness. It is provided by a team of trained specialists, which may include a physician, nurse, social worker, chaplain, and other care specialists who work alongside a patient's doctor to provide an extra layer of support. Palliative care is appropriate at any age and at any stage of a serious illness and can be provided alongside curative treatment.

Evidence-based research has demonstrated that patients in hospital systems with palliative care programs experience reduced emergency room visits, fewer days in intensive care, and fewer hospital re-admissions after discharge. Additionally, studies have shown that early access to palliative care for seriously ill patients can in some cases prolong patients' lives while promoting their well-being.

As Minnesota lawmakers strive to provide solutions that will improve the quality of healthcare for patients and support our healthcare workforce, expanding access to high-quality palliative care for all patients with serious illnesses is a proven way to reach these goals.

On behalf of the Minnesota Alliance for Ethical Healthcare, thank you for your support of H.F.2291.

Respectfully yours,

Lynn Varco
Board Member

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