Dear legislative leaders,

The current pandemic crisis facing Minnesota shows us that we are all vulnerable to threats to our health and safety. No matter where we come from or what we look like, all Minnesotans want to feel safe, get the care we need, and be able to thrive. Yet our state and nation are facing an unprecedented crisis that threatens the health and safety of us all.

Minnesotans who rely on basic and essential supports, like child care, health care, mental health care, and other support services administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) are especially vulnerable during this crisis.

On March 16, the Legislature passed COVID-19 emergency funding, shoring up our health care systems and institutions, but failed to pass legislation that would allow the state to take the emergency measures needed to keep all Minnesotans safe.

As a broad-based group of advocacy organizations and providers from across Minnesota we urge policymakers to reconvene Wednesday, March 18 to take action that will better ensure our friends, family members, and neighbors who depend on safety net supports can weather this crisis.

A wide range of basic critical policy areas administered by DHS are impacted: child care, mental health services, services for persons with disabilities and older adults, health care (Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare), economic assistance, housing support, children’s services, supports for vulnerable populations, and the direct care and treatment system.

Legislators should act so that:
- Health coverage renewals can be delayed so that people don’t lose Medicaid;
- Seniors and families do not lose food assistance;
People with chronic health issues can do assessments and other visits remotely instead of face-to-face.
People can access sufficient critical mental health treatment via telemedicine;
People with disabilities and chronic health conditions can access supports, including shared staffing, PCA services, and paid supports from family members, that will allow them to stay healthy and stable at home;
Child care providers have the flexibility they need to stay open and continue providing care for children of health care workers and first responders.

These are just a small fraction of the actions DHS should implement to meet the needs of Minnesotans during this crisis. We urge the Legislature to reconvene immediately and take action to allow the state to address these urgent community needs.

Sincerely,

A Place For Hope: Recovery & Wellness
A.H. Wilder Foundation Community Mental Health & Wellness
Accord
Adolescent Treatment Center
Advocating Change Together
AFSCME Council 5
AFSCME Council 66
Aliveness Project
Alzheimer's Association MN-ND Chapter
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Emergency Physicians, Minnesota Chapter
American College of Physicians, Minnesota Chapter
Appetite For Change, Ince.
Apple Tree Dental
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc.
Arthritis Foundation
Asian American Organizing Project (AAOP)
AspireMN
Autism Society of Minnesota
Black Women's Wealth Alliance, SBC
Bridges MN
Brown County Human Services
CAIR-MN
Care Providers of Minnesota
Carver Scott Dakota CAP Agency
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
Catholic Health Association of Minnesota
Central Minnesota Mental Health Center
Central MN Council on Aging
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL)
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
Children's Home Society of Minnesota
Children's Minnesota
Clay County Adult Mental Health Local Advisory Council
Community Action Duluth
Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties
Community Dental Care
Community University Health Care Center
Corner Home Medical
CURE
Disability Justice Network of Minnesota
Domestic Abuse Project
Ecumen
Education Minnesota
Elder Voice Family Advocates
Ellie Family Services
Emerge Community Development
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota
Episcopal Church in Minnesota
EVOLVE Family Services
Faith in Minnesota
Fraser
Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare
Greater Twin Cities United Way
Greenline PCA
Growth & Justice
Guardian and Conservator Services, LLC
Guild Incorporated
Hamm Memorial Psychiatric Clinic
Hammer Residences
Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs
Minnesota Association of Marriage and Family Therapy
Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE)
Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health (MARRCH)
Minnesota Behavioral Health Network
Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance
Minnesota Budget Project
Minnesota Catholic Conference
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Minnesota Chapter, American College of Physicians
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
Minnesota Community Action Partnership
Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
Minnesota Council of Churches
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Council on Disability
Minnesota Elder Justice Center
Minnesota First Provider Alliance
Minnesota Immigrant Health Alliance
Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light
Minnesota Medical Association
Minnesota Nurse Practitioners
Minnesota Nurses Association
Minnesota Psychiatric Society
Minnesota Psychological Association
Minnesota School Social Workers Association
Minnesota Social Service Association
Minnesota Valley Action Council
Minnesota Youth Climate Strike
MN 350
MN American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
MN APRN (Advance Practice Registered Nurses) Coalition
MN Hospital Association
MN Licensed Practical Nurses Association
MN State Advisory Committee on Mental Health
Multicultural Autism Action Network
Muslim American Society of Minnesota
NAMI Minnesota
National Association of Social Workers - MN Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women - Minnesota
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Navigate/UnidosMN
Neighborhood House
New Challenges, Inc
New Life Treatment Center
Nexus Community Partners
Northeast Youth & Family Services
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC)
Northeast Community Action
Northwest Indian Community Development Center
Northwestern Mental Health Center
NUWAY
Open Arms of Minnesota
Opportunity Partners
OutFront Minnesota
Outreach, LLC
Paralyzed Veterans of America, Minnesota Chapter
People Incorporated
People Serving People
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center
Pillsbury United Communities
Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota Action Fund
Pregnancy Postpartum Support Minnesota
Proof Alliance
Range Treatment Center
Reach for Resources, Inc.
ResCare MN
Residential Transitions Inc
Saint Paul Federation of Educators, Local #28
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota
SEIU Local 284
Sioux Club North Star Chapter
Sioux Trails Mental Health Center
Southeastern MN Center for Independent Living, Inc.
St Louis Park Emergency Program
State Advisory Council on Mental Health
State Subcommittee on Children’s Mental Health
Superior Home Care
TakeAction Minnesota