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**Bill to Support Seniors and Caregivers Receives Hearing in House Human Services Finance Committee**

*The legislation invests in senior care, protecting seniors’ access to essential, quality care in their communities.*

ST. PAUL, MINN. – Critical legislation addressing the unprecedented senior caregiver shortage will be heard in the House Human Services Finance Committee on Tuesday, January 31. Representative Heather Edelson (DFL-50A) is the chief author of HF 733, a bill that takes meaningful steps toward improving state payment rates for senior care services. Senator John Hoffman (DFL-34) is the chief author of the bill in the Senate.

A workforce shortage of roughly 22,000 caregiver positions in our senior care community is taking a toll on Minnesotans and hospital systems. 11,000 seniors were denied essential care in October of 2022 alone. More than half of nursing homes and assisted living settings have waiting lists for admissions, families are struggling to find appropriate options. A recent report from the Minnesota Hospital Association reveals that the shortage has created a bottleneck for other Minnesotans seeking care in hospitals.

The gap between the number of caregivers and older adults with care needs is growing each week. As 50,000 more Minnesotans are set to turn 80 in the next five years, meaningful state action is long overdue. Reimbursement rates set by the state government directly impact caregivers’ wages, which currently averages less than $17 per hour for a starting salary. The state has a responsibility to ensure our caregivers are adequately paid and that our seniors receive essential care.

“On behalf of the seniors’ whose well-being I’m responsible for as a caregiver, I want to thank the House for advancing this legislation,” said Brielle Khalar, Executive Director at Ecumen. “For too long, the state of Minnesota has neglected the people we serve. By increasing state funding, caregivers can finally be paid what they need and deserve.”

“Minnesota’s older generation deserves to age well and with dignity,” said Cami Peterson-DeVries from St. Francis Health Services of Morris. “Providing care to seniors is my calling, and I’m relieved to see legislators like Rep. Edelson and Sen. Hoffman who not only sees the value of our profession, but is working to avert a crisis.”

The hearing will take place in State Office Building - Room 200 at 1 p.m. on Jan. 31. The hearing can also be viewed at https://www.house.mn.gov/schedules/committee/93013/All

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*The Long-Term Care Imperative is a collaboration of LeadingAge Minnesota and Care Providers of Minnesota, two of the state’s largest long-term care associations. The Long-Term Care Imperative is committed to advancing a shared vision and future for older adult housing, health care and supportive services.*

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