



February 23, 2022

Ms. Cynthia MacDonald  
Assistant Commissioner Health Care Administration  
Minnesota Department of Human Services  
540 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Assistant Commissioner MacDonald:

I am writing to express MRC's deep disappointment in DHS's decision to issue a Greater Minnesota public programs procurement RFP that violates state law by eliminating the opportunity for counties to choose county-based purchasing (CBP) on a single-plan basis. We are further disappointed in the agencies refusal to mediate this matter with CBP counties.

MRC has monitored dialogue between DHS and counties engaged in CBP over the last two years through the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), and the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators (MACSSA), and has worked closely with the Minnesota Association of County Health Plans (MACHP) to keep our members apprised of developments. We were pleased and hopeful with DHS's efforts to collaborate more closely with counties in the procurement process during 2021. But the recent unilateral decision to include contracts with a minimum of two MCO plans in every county for the Greater Minnesota procurement RFP has shaken that emerging hope.

Twenty-two Greater Minnesota counties own and operate CBP plans that have operated successfully under statutory authority initially granted in 1997 (MS256B.692 and 256B.694), with another 11 counties ready to embrace this model. That success stems from quality of care, revenues that stay in the community, and hometown solutions to meet health care needs. Because county-based plans are so effective, I have no doubt more counties would participate in the model if they had more faith DHS would adhere to state law concerning county authority and CBP.

We would like to discuss this decision with you and invite you to address our MRC Board of Directors at its next meeting, this coming Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, at 5 p.m. in St. Paul. It is a hybrid meeting that can be attended in-person or via Zoom. County authority and CBP are priority issues with MRC membership, and we would very much appreciate the opportunity to understand the process that led to the decision to eliminate counties' option to consider CBP on a single-plan basis in this current RFP. Please let me know if you can join us, and I will be glad to provide more details.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter, and look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Johnson".

Luke Johnson  
MRC Chairman  
Pipestone County Commissioner