



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

116 Veterans Service Building ♦ 20 West 12th Street ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

November 23, 2016

The Honorable Greg Davids
Minnesota House of Representatives
Room 585, State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Matt Dean
Minnesota House of Representatives
Room 401, State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Joe Hoppe
Minnesota House of Representatives
Room 543, State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

The Honorable Tara Mack
Minnesota House of Representatives
Room 545, State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Representatives Davids, Dean, Hoppe, and Mack:

I am responding to your November 21st letter regarding state assistance for health premiums. As you know, I proposed legislation on October 27th that would provide a one-year, 25% reduction of 2017 health insurance premiums to Minnesotans, who purchase coverage on the individual market and do not qualify for federal tax credits. My Commissioners and staff have been in ongoing discussions with the health plans and have reached consensus with them to help us administer this plan upon legislative approval. If that approval were to occur very soon, implementation could begin in January so that many Minnesotans would be able to receive the 25% premium reduction.

However, in your letter, you do not agree to my proposal. Instead, almost four weeks later you briefly outline a 20 percent premium reduction for those Minnesotans for only one month. That would provide only 7% of the financial relief that Minnesotans would receive next year under my plan.

For the rest of 2017, your letter briefly outlines a concept of "Targeted Assistance," which would take more time to develop. Furthermore, it is my understanding that the health plans have not been consulted on your proposal. Before it could be considered a real alternative, you would need to find out whether or not they could implement it. In our previous discussions, they have told us that they do not have the capabilities to distinguish different income levels above the threshold amount. You should also determine whether they would continue to participate in the individual market, if Section #3 of your letter were to be imposed upon them.

My proposal is far from an ideal solution. However, it could be implemented immediately, administered beginning in January by our agencies and the participating health plans, and provide 25% price reductions to people, whom you, your colleagues, and I have been citing as victims of the current insurance price escalation.

If you really do want to help Minnesotans and strengthen the individual market by having more people seek health insurance, my proposal is still the only one we know. It is the only one agreed to by the health plans. It is the only one that could be ready to begin, when 2017 arrives.

Continuing to throw out other undeveloped and unvetted possibilities, appears to me to be a pretext for not taking action. If that is truly your intention, then say so, and we can all postpone further consideration of your ideas and numerous others until next year.

Finally, regarding the request by your Caucus for federal money to pay for this program, I have received a verbal response from the Acting Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that it is not viable under federal requirements.

I am asking my staff to meet again with you and Members of the other three Caucuses at 4:00 pm next Monday, November 28th, on the fifth floor of the Veterans Services Building, to determine whether or not we will proceed now or delay action until next year. Please notify my Chief of Staff, Jaime Tincher, at Jaime.tincher@state.mn.us, if you will attend.

My best regards.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Tom Bakk
Speaker Kurt Daudt
Representative Paul Thissen
Senator David Hann
Senator Jim Abeler
Senator Michelle Benson
Senator Ann Rest
Senator Tony Lourey
Senator Jeff Hayden

Attachment: MNsure's Results to-date and Call Center wait times

Current Open Enrollment Statistics

As of close of business November 22, 2016

Enrollments

Total new enrollments: 29,514

Contact Center

Current call volume: 2465

Current average wait time: 5 seconds

MNsure Applications

Applications open: 51,480

Applications saved (in-process): 19,042

Applications completed: 41,506

MNsure.org Metrics

MNsure.org visits: 683,143

Number of times people used the shopping comparison tool: 129,734

Number of times people signed into accounts: 427,662

Number of accounts created: 47,946

Daily Call Wait Times

DATE	Average Time to Answer
1-Nov	0:30:46
2-Nov	0:05:30
3-Nov	0:01:34
4-Nov	0:00:29
5-Nov	0:00:00
6-Nov	0:00:11
7-Nov	0:00:35
8-Nov	0:00:28
9-Nov	0:00:26
10-Nov	0:00:28
11-Nov	0:00:10
12-Nov	0:00:07
13-Nov	0:00:00
14-Nov	0:00:38
15-Nov	0:00:12
16-Nov	0:00:10
17-Nov	0:00:08
18-Nov	0:00:08
19-Nov	0:00:02
20-Nov	CLOSED
21-Nov	0:00:04
22-Nov	0:00:05