



Minnesota Hospital Association

2550 University Ave. W., Suite 350-S
St. Paul, MN 55114-1900

phone: (651) 641-1121; fax: (651) 659-1477
toll-free: (800) 462-5393; www.mnhospitals.org

**Frontline Worker Pay Working Group
July 28, 2021
On behalf of the Minnesota Hospital Association**

State Senators, State Representatives and Commissioners.

My name is Mary Krinkie, and I am with the Minnesota Hospital Association. First, I would like to start by thanking the entire Legislature for allocating this \$250 million to help provide monetary appreciation for some of the essential workers who contributed to our wellbeing and gave so much of themselves during the COVID pandemic. Also, I would like to thank each of you for agreeing to serve on this Working Group – you have the difficult task of deciding how best to distribute these dollars – and will be giving of your time after being in Session almost non-stop for the last 18 months.

Obviously, the more employee groups that are included the less that can be provided to each individual. So, it will be a difficult balancing act as you weigh the contributions of different employee groups and decide whether they should be included or not.

Recognizing that we are certainly advocating on behalf of health care workers, and hospital employees, we believe hospital employees should be treated similarly if in comparable jobs to long-term care employees.

MHA would like to make the following six suggestions:

1. Prioritize frontline essential workers, who had no choice but to work physically at their place of employment, with no ability to work from home.
2. Prioritize workers who had direct contact caring for individuals who had COVID-19.
3. Prioritize workers who had contact with COVID-19 patients' or residents' rooms, including cleaning staffs, or food service workers for those patients or residents, as well as laboratory professionals dealing with patient samples.
4. Set a minimum threshold for number of hours worked in order to receive this payment. If there is a desire to also include part time workers, set a lower threshold of hours, but still have a minimum number of hours to qualify and there could be a payment differential between full time and part time workers. Determine a start and ending date for the time period of when the hours are to be calculated.
5. Depending on the employee groups identified to be the recipients, and the numbers of potential recipients comprised from those employee groups, it may be necessary to have an upper income threshold for the distribution. For example, only an employee with an annual income of less than \$100,000 a year would be eligible for the distribution.
6. And finally, please keep this as administratively simple as possible for employers, with specific guidelines to ensure fairness between a similar employee category.

Thank you for consideration of our input and we look forward to working with you on this important endeavor.