TRELLIS

March 17, 2026

The Honorable John Hoffman
Minnesota Senate
2111 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hoffman, Vice Chair Fateh, Ranking Member Rasmusson and members of the Human Services Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Trellis, the Area Agency on Aging for the seven-county metropolitan area, in strong support for changes to the Senior Nutrition Program statute and additional funding for senior meals.

Specifically, I ask for your support of SF4508/HF4210 to update Minnesota's Senior Nutrition Program statute and help providers meet the growing needs of our aging population with innovative solutions.

The Senior Nutrition Program is a lifeline for older Minnesotans who are at risk for malnutrition. Food access can make the difference between older adults living independently in their homes and needing more expensive institutional care. In fiscal year 2025, the program provided 2,500,000 home-delivered meals and 669,000 congregate dining meals.

Yet we know the need for senior nutrition is increasing. As the metropolitan region's funding administrator of the Senior Nutrition Program, Trellis hears from provider partners that their senior meals waitlists are growing. Some providers have no choice but to turn people away. This increased need is compounded by rising food costs, forcing providers to be creative in stretching their funding as much as possible. The Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging estimates that 6,100 fewer older Minnesotans will be served in 2026 as compared to 2025.

SF4508/HF4210 helps address the increasing need for senior nutrition by improving efficiency in service delivery and providing flexibility for innovation. The proposed revisions to the Senior Nutrition Program statute will have an outsized impact for older Minnesotans. The updated language expands the types of partnerships providers can create to serve older adults, such as coordinating with health and long-term care systems,

hospitals, food shelves and more. The bill also allows providers to offer not only prepared meals but also fresh produce, food boxes, meal kits and other innovative delivery methods.

Trellis and all Minnesota area agencies on aging are well-equipped to administer state funding for the Senior Nutrition Program effectively. Our comprehensive accountability framework is designed to prevent, detect and correct fraud, waste and abuse. Every dollar is justified, documented and fully traceable to ensure program integrity.

SF4508/HF4210 is an opportunity to bring the Senior Nutrition Program statute up to date with the changing needs of communities across Minnesota. It represents a step forward in improving the health and wellness of older adults, which benefits Minnesotans of all ages.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical legislation. If you have any questions, please contact Trellis President and CEO Dawn Simonson at 651-900-8700 or dsimonson@trellisconnects.org.

Sincerely,

Mike Rothman
Chair, Trellis Board of Directors