

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Federal Legislative Platform

2020

Hennepin County is the 32nd most populous county in the United States, and the largest in Minnesota. Within the county are 45 cities, including Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport. The county is also home to 12 Fortune 500 Companies including Target, UnitedHealth Group, and Best Buy. As a global hub of commerce and a national center for health care delivery and innovation, our relationship with the Federal Government has local, regional, and national significance. A thriving Hennepin County is important to the country.

Priorities

Transportation

Sustain and strengthen the federal-state-county partnership that supports the nation's roads, bridges, transit, and rail systems. Ensure Minnesota's transportation infrastructure supports a 21st century economy and vibrant, active communities.

Health and human services

Encourage innovation in solving complex health and human services problems and recognize crises such as opioids through prevention. Maximize partnerships among federal, state, county, and private funders to support sustainable models of health and wellness.

Safety-net health services

Ensure access to meaningful and affordable health care by protecting and promoting the financial vitality of safety-net systems, like Hennepin Healthcare System, in the context of federal reforms to publicly funded health care programs, like Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Basic Health Plan, and Medicare.

Platform

Climate change

Support legislation and administrative policies that address climate change, protect and enhance natural environments, and promote sustainability in county operations

Criminal justice

Support criminal justice, mental health and sentencing reforms that advance proven diversion strategies and facilitate offender re-entry.

- Reduce regulatory burdens (e.g., Institution of Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion, data sharing limitations) that compromise services for people experiencing mental illness before they become involved in the justice system
- Support continued federal investment in local offender re-entry programs and other initiatives critical to reducing adult and juvenile involvement in the justice system
- Encourage and reward state and local collaborations that reduce barriers to employment and housing

Health and human services

Encourage innovation in solving complex health and human services problems and recognize crises such as opioids through prevention. Maximize partnerships among federal, state, county, and private funders to support sustainable models of health and wellness.

- Maximize state flexibility under Medicaid to encourage innovation in the delivery of care that improves overall population health and rewards efficiency
- Oppose mandatory Medicaid or SNAP enrollee work requirements or changes to the social safety net such as block granting or payment caps

- Support changes to the Affordable Care Act that strengthen systems of health care delivery, expand access, and lower costs
- Support welfare reform initiatives that streamline and simplify access to services and encourage innovation at the local government level to create pathways out of poverty
- Support interventions to address critical public health needs such as the epidemic of opiate overuse, unsheltered homelessness, emergency preparedness, infectious diseases, mental health, maternal and child health, and pregnancy prevention
- Eliminate federal barriers to data sharing so that local governments can better support care coordination and efficient service delivery
- Support elimination of the Medicaid exclusion for pre-adjudicated persons under law enforcement supervision. Support state flexibility in the Medicaid program to cover justice-involved individuals

Housing and community development

Address the crisis in affordable housing through direct federal investment.

- Increase federal funding for the Community Development Block Grant program, HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8), and other programs that assist very low-income households, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing
- Expand shelter and supports to address the immediate needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness

Immigration

Support comprehensive immigration reform that creates pathways to citizenship, addresses workforce development opportunities, provides access to health care and education, and supports fair and equitable interface with local public safety agencies. Oppose efforts to reduce or restrict access to the social safety net for immigrants and eliminate barriers to refugee resettlement.

Safety-net health services

Ensure access to meaningful and affordable health care by protecting and promoting the financial vitality of safety-net systems, like Hennepin Healthcare System, in the context of federal reforms to publicly funded health care programs, like Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Basic Health Plan, and Medicare.

- Protect critical funding streams and payments to safety-net providers, including the 340B Drug Pricing Program, Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program, and supplemental payments for Medicare and Medicaid
- Support beneficial adjustments to federal payment methodologies in both Medicaid and Medicare for safety-net providers that take into account social determinants of health that unfairly penalize hospitals that serve a large proportion of low-income seniors and people with disabilities. Promote the financial vitality of safety-net systems by aligning federal reimbursement with the cost of care.
- Promote the health of our patients by protecting health insurance coverage and access to life-saving prescription drugs and by opposing the 'Public Charge' Rule

Taxes

Support federal tax policies to leverage local investment in infrastructure, housing, and services.

- Support continued tax-free status of municipal bonds and private activity bonds. Restore local government authority to advance refund tax-exempt bonds (authority was eliminated in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017)

- Preserve and strengthen the low-income housing, Federal Historic, and New Markets tax credit programs

Transportation

Sustain and strengthen the federal-state-county partnership that supports the nation's roads, bridges, transit, and rail systems. Ensure Minnesota's transportation infrastructure supports a 21st century economy and vibrant, active communities.

- Increase infrastructure investment through new sources of revenue and support continued federal partnerships in projects such as the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program
- Support key investments:
 - Green Line extension (Southwest LRT)
 - Blue Line extension (Bottineau LRT)
- Support cash and innovative financing options in any comprehensive infrastructure package

Workforce development

Support partnerships among local government, employers and training partners to meet regional workforce needs, address economic disparities and improve the economic competitiveness of our region.

- Provide flexibility in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs to better support career pathways and career technical education for dislocated or under-skilled workers, youth and higher-barrier populations. (e.g. Recognition of employer and industry-recognized credentialing for use of federal funds.)
- Support regional sector-based partnerships providing career pathways to promote economic inclusion, address employment and income disparities, and meet industry hiring needs

Hennepin County

Board of Commissioners

A-2400 Government Center
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0240

hennepin.us

Mike Opat

[District 1, Vice Chair,](#)
[IGR Co-Chair](#)

612-348-7881
mike.opat@hennepin.us

Irene Fernando

[District 2](#)

612-348-7882
irene.fernando@hennepin.us

Marion Greene

[District 3, Chair](#)

612-348-7883
marion.greene@hennepin.us

Angela Conley

[District 4](#)

612-348-7884
angela.conley@hennepin.us

Debbie Goettel

[District 5](#)

612-348-7885
debbie.goettel@hennepin.us

Jan Callison

[District 6, IGR Co-Chair](#)

612-348-7886
jan.callison@hennepin.us

Jeff Johnson

[District 7](#)

612-348-7887
jeff.r.johnson@hennepin.us

County Administration

A-2303 Government Center
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0233

David J. Hough

[County Administrator](#)

612-348-7574
county.admin@hennepin.us

Intergovernmental Relations

A-2305 Government Center
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0235

Kareem Murphy

[Director](#)

Office: 612-596-9711
Cell: 612-559-5279
kareem.murphy@hennepin.us

Kaade Wallace

[Public Policy Manager](#)

Office: 612-348-7173
Cell: 612-559-0447
kaade.wallace@hennepin.us

Brennan Furness

[Public Policy Manager](#)

Office: 612-348-5120
Cell: 612-235-0938
brennan.furness@hennepin.us

Kirk Pederson

[Public Policy Manager](#)

Office: 612-348-3269
Cell: 612-432-0447
kirk.pederson@hennepin.us

Wanda Cannon

[Legislative Coordinator](#)

Office: 612-348-3233
Cell: 612-559-6510
wanda.cannon@hennepin.us

Hennepin Healthcare System

701 Park Avenue, S6.107
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Susie Emmert

[Senior Director, Advocacy and Public Policy](#)

Office: 612-873-2140
Cell: 651-278-5422
susie.emmert@hcmed.org