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Minnesota Farmers Union Vice President, Gary Wertish, spoke on behalf of rural MN in support of Senator Sheran & Representative Johnson’s waiver request for Affordable healthcare.

St. Paul, MN (March 17, 2016) – Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) Vice President, Gary Wertish spoke on behalf of rural Minnesotans and family farmers at a press conference hosted by Senator Sheran and Representative Johnson. The press conference introduced legislation that seeks a federal waiver to extend options for affordable healthcare coverage in Minnesota.

Senator Sheran, Representative Johnson, and Vice President Wertish were joined by fellow legislators that supported the waiver as well as advocates from TakeAction MN. This bill would require the Commissioner of Human Services to submit a waiver request to the federal government asking to open MinnesotaCare enrollment to Minnesotans who wish to purchase healthcare coverage that is available through this program.

“In rural MN you don’t have any leverage; we are price takers, not price makers as family farmers, this applies to our products and our healthcare coverage. We have a lot of residents in the rural communities that fall through the cracks. Having another healthcare option is very important to all of Minnesota, but especially family farmers and residents in rural communities” stated Wertish. “Rural MN needs affordability and accessibility, but even if you have that but can’t afford it you are still in trouble, which makes this waiver request important for all of rural Minnesota”

In many parts of the state there are a limited number of healthcare coverage options, and many residents are forced to pay high deductibles and high premiums just to get coverage. This waiver would also open up extended healthcare options that may not be available on those limited number of plans and companies, such as dental care, eye care, mental health and chemical dependency care. This has been a problem for rural Minnesota for a long time and having the opportunity for all Minnesotans to have access to affordable healthcare will help resolve this issue and will give the hard-working people of rural Minnesota the well-deserved choice to enter into MinnesotaCare, which may be a more affordable coverage option for them.

Minnesota Farmers Union—Standing for Agriculture, Fighting for Farmers (www.mfu.org).

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