

April 6th, 2021

To: Members of the MN House Human Services Policy and Finance Committee  
From: MACMHP, AspireMN and MHPAM  
Re: Written Testimony on House File 2127 – DE1 Amendment

Members of the MN House Human Services Policy and Finance Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding our three organizations' strong support for House File 2127 – DE1 amendment's articles of the Mental Health Uniform Service Standards (USS) proposal along with related updates to mental health crisis services.

We are submitting this written testimony on behalf of the three largest Mental Health service provider associations here in Minnesota. These include the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, AspireMN, and the Mental Health Providers Association of Minnesota.

Representatives from our three service provider associations have been active in the Mental Health Uniform Service Standards legislative proposal stakeholder work for the past two years. We have dedicated many hours to this process because the current mental health regulatory system needs change. Under our current mental health regulatory system, providers have to spend a great deal of time tracking down various pieces of statute and rule and variance just to determine which regulations apply to which mental health services, trying to interpret those at times confusing regulations, and often having to follow up with regulatory agencies about how to proceed when some of those regulations are in conflict. All the time spent on all these activities is time that providers can't spend delivering high quality mental health services to clients. Our hope is that by moving to the unified licensing framework for mental health services proposed with this legislative language, providers will have a more transparent and uniform system of standards to operate within that will better support their goal of increasing access to high quality mental health care for Minnesotans.

It has been very valuable to have stakeholders from the Department of Human Services, the provider community, counties and the advocacy community come together to provide input on this proposal with the shared end goal of improving access to high quality mental health services for Minnesotans. We have appreciated the collaborative process and look forward to continuing the collaboration as this bill is revised as it moves through the legislative process as well as in future legislative sessions when we return with further improvements.

**We would like to thank this committee for including the Mental Health USS proposal (HF 1495) in your committee omnibus bill,** and we ask you to support inclusion of several recently addressed provisions in the behavioral health services across stakeholders, including - allowing support and information from families and loved ones of someone in mental health crisis responses; and providing for community mental health centers (CMHCs) ability to offer as much support from doctoral mental health professionals as we can while recognizing long-standing workforce shortages and challenges. We appreciate the concerns raised by the Psychologists and Psychiatrists. But, requiring CMHCs to staff a higher standard than current law will endanger funding and the ability to serve our communities. We welcome further conversation as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Regulatory details and processes are not always the most exciting of legislative reforms, but they truly impact the experience of Minnesotans navigating the mental health service system.

Sincerely,

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