



MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair
Human Services Policy Committee
October 16, 2023

Chair Fischer and Human Services Policy Committee Members,

Thank you for your attention to mental health needs. On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN), we are writing with comments for your consideration.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers. We represent clinical social workers (LICSW) who make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota, social work educators training the next generation of providers, and social work students.

Social work is based on a mission to enhance the well-being of humans. We advocate for our clients, and want to ensure that social workers and other professionals are supported in their work. As such, we have identified key workforce issues specific to our profession. We believe that addressing these issues will allow us to expand mental health services and better serve our clients.

- Social workers, like many other professions, seek easier ways to be licensed in multiple states. This is particularly important for professionals who live near the state border. An interstate license is a practical solution that will increase the number of available providers and make it easier to offer continuous service to young people as they transition to new locations after high school. We look forward to sharing newly developed language that will allow social workers to obtain an interstate license in addition to their Minnesota license.
- Many settings in which social workers serve are in need of rate adjustments and reform. Paying providers fair rates for the services they offer not only allows them to offer better care to Minnesotans in a way that aligns with social work values, it allows them to attract the necessary workforce to serve clients well.
- As we increase attention on the role of social workers and mental health crisis response as a public safety solution, it is important to ensure that we use accurate titles. When social work licensing laws passed in 1987, an exemption was made so that county employees are allowed to represent themselves to the public as social workers regardless of their educational background or training. We believe that standard and transparent titles will better serve the public and better honor our profession.
- Access to affordable education and paid internships are the top issue named by social work students. We will work with our mental health professional partners on immediate solutions, including expanding supervision grant programs to the Moorehead region, while continuing to advocate for better access to our profession.

We appreciate your service and work on this committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen E. Goodenough".

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Arneson".

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN