



Improving lives for adults living with mental illnesses as well as maintaining the viability of providers through one voice for quality adult mental health services.

February 16, 2021

To: Members of the MN House Behavioral Health Policy Division
From: The Board of the Mental Health Providers Association of MN (MHPAM)
Re: Support for HF 970

Members of the MN House Behavioral Health Policy Division,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding our strong support for HF 970 (Rep. Vang), which would move our state forward in increasing the diversity and cultural responsiveness of Minnesota's mental health workforce. We are submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Mental Health Providers Association of Minnesota (MHPAM). MHPAM is a non-profit organization of providers representing both for-profit and non-profit mental health providers in the state of Minnesota. Our member organizations provide a variety of mental health services for adults throughout Minnesota such as: Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Adult Foster Care, Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS), Crisis Residential Stabilization Services, Targeted Case Management, and many others. The mission of our organization is "Improving lives for adults living with mental illnesses as well as maintaining the viability of providers through one voice for quality adult mental health services."

As you know, Minnesota has much work to do to increase the cultural diversity and cultural responsiveness of our mental health services workforce. While we have made progress in this area in recent years, we still have a problematic lack of diversity and cultural responsiveness in parts of our mental health workforce. We must increase our policymaking efforts to address this issue because as stated simply in the 2015 Legislative Report *Gearing Up for Action: Mental Health Workforce Plan for Minnesota*, "to be effective, mental health treatment must be sensitive to the culture of the people being served."

HF970 proposes concrete steps forward our state can take to begin to address some of the most common barriers to increasing the diversity and cultural responsiveness of our mental health workforce. The legislation's components, such as expanding the use of mental health grants to include paying for supervision for clinical trainees from the BIPOC communities and requiring the MN Departments of Human Services and Health to convene the various relevant licensing boards to develop recommendations about how to make supervision more accessible to increase the number of individuals who are able to become licensed, reflect what we see on the ground as barriers to making progress on this issue of diversity and cultural responsiveness.

We encourage you to support HF 970 which aims to help move our state towards the important goal of providing more Minnesotans with access to high quality mental health services.

Sincerely,

Jeff Bradley, Thrive Behavioral Network LLC, MHPAM President, jeff.bradley@thrivebn.com