NASW

National Association of Social Workers

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Representative Tina Liebling, Chair
Health Finance and Policy
March 21, 2023

Chair Liebling and Health Finance and Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Society for Clinical Social Work (Clinical Society), we are writing in support of House File 346, a bill that establishes a mental health services rate increase bridge.

Clinical social workers (LICSW) make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota. NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers, and the Clinical Society is a professional group who advance the practice of clinical social work in Minnesota. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in mental health practice.

Currently providers are subsidizing the cost of mental health services to Minnesotans and just like the rest of the country, these providers are impacted by inflation which only compounds the financial burden. Delaying rate adjustments simply tells providers that they must continue this unsustainable financial arrangement with the state.

The increased need for mental health services is well documented, and we know we must attract more providers and retain the ones we have. We need to address rates with the same urgency we talk about meeting the mental health needs of Minnesotans. When providers earn only a fraction of the actual cost of delivering services, they can not reasonably attract the necessary workforce to serve clients well.

Clinical social workers want to serve the mental health needs of the most vulnerable Minnesotans. We are requesting fair payment for the services we provide.

Please support HF346. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

James Stoltz, LICSW, LADC
Legislative Committee
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