



# Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

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Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP), I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is the state's leading association for Community Mental Health Programs, representing 33 community-based mental health providers and agencies across the state. Collectively, we serve over 200,000 Minnesota families, children and adults. Our mission is to serve all who come to us seeking mental and chemical health services, regardless of their insurance status, ability to pay or where they live. As Essential Community Providers, we serve primarily culturally diverse, low-income, uninsured and public healthcare program insured Minnesotans, who cannot access services elsewhere. We serve our clients with comprehensive, coordinated care and love.

Mental health programs' staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. MACMHP supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers from communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

Specifically, and most importantly to MACMHP, the bill –

- convenes a workgroup to address barriers in the current professional licensure process and consider an alternative licensure pathway.
- expands the definition of a mental health practitioner to include students completing internships while in their programs (graduate or undergraduate). This way students, particularly non-traditional students with families and children, do not have to choose between completing their degree and making wages to provide for their families. This also allows our community mental and chemical health agencies to hire more mental health practitioners, under a wider net of eligibility.

All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely

Jin Lee Palen  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs | MACMHP



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610 Florence Ave.  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
Telephone: (507) 451-2630  
www.schrc.com

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives

February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of South Central Human Relations Center, Inc., I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - *Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support*.

South Central Human Relations Center, Inc. is a Community Mental Health Center serving the residents of Dodge, Steele, and Waseca Counties. We offer our services through offices in Kasson, Waseca, and our main office in Owatonna. Our mental health professionals offer a full range of services to our communities, including psychiatry, therapy, case management, and substance use treatment.

As a community mental and chemical health program and safety net provider, we serve clients and communities who would not otherwise have access to mental and chemical health care.

Our staff are key/critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Our organization supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

Most importantly, the bill –

- convenes a workgroup to address barriers in the current professional licensure process and consider an alternative licensure pathway.
- expands the definition of a mental health practitioner to include students completing internships while in their programs (graduate or undergraduate). This way students, particularly non-traditional students with families and children, do not have to choose between completing their degree and making wages to feed their families. This also allows agencies to hire more mental health practitioners, under a wider net of eligibility.

All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gary M. Hird". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being more prominent.

Gary M. Hird  
Executive Director



Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives

February 16, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members:

Fraser supports Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Fraser is a nonprofit, community mental health clinic. We're known for our broad collection of specialty services, including programs for young children, children with autism, children on the adoption and permanency spectrum, and adults with co-occurring intellectual disability and mental illness. For every child we serve we also support indirectly or directly at least one adult who cares for the child.

As a community mental health program and safety net provider, Fraser serves clients and communities who would not otherwise have access to mental health care.

Our staff are critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Fraser supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely

Abby Vavra  
Public Policy and Compliance Counsel





408 St. Peter Street, #429  
St. Paul, MN 55102

(651) 224-0614  
(651) 224-5754 fax

[www.hammclinic.org](http://www.hammclinic.org)

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 15, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members:

On behalf of Hamm Memorial Psychiatric Clinic, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Hamm Clinic is a community mental health agency in St. Paul founded in 1954, providing integrated mental health services to clients in our community, with a focus on those with financial barriers to accessing care. We have robust psychiatry, individual, couple, family, and group therapy services, psychological evaluation, and nursing. We have a robust multidisciplinary training program and focus on training students into trauma responsive culturally responsive services – with a stipend supported scholarship program for BIPOC students to support training and increased diversity in the field of mental health.

As a community mental health program and safety net provider Hamm Clinic serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental health care otherwise.

Our staff are critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Hamm Clinic supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

Most importantly, the bill –

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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely,

Angela Lewis-Dmello  
Executive Director

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center (HVMHC) is a comprehensive community mental health center established since 1965. We provide services in five rural counties, Fillmore, Houston, Wabasha, Goodhue and Winona.

As a community mental (and chemical) health program and safety net provider Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.

Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

Most importantly, the bill –

- convenes a workgroup to address barriers in the current professional licensure process and consider an alternative licensure pathway.
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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely



Erik Sievers  
Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center Director



Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of Washburn Center for Children, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Washburn Center for Children's mission is to nurture every child and family's well-being and full potential through transformative children's mental health care. Our expert trauma informed therapeutic care helps children struggling with social, emotional or behavioral challenges such as loss or grief, anxiety, depression, attention deficit disorder, and trauma. With three office locations - Brooklyn Park, Edina and Minneapolis - Washburn Center for Children serves more than 3,700 children and approximately 11,100 family members annually in the Twin Cities metro area. We also offer in-home and community-based services, with our school-based program serving students in 28 schools. More than 65% of children served are from families with low-incomes.

As a community mental (and chemical) health program and safety net provider, Washburn Center for Children serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.

Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Washburn Center for Children supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the



[washburn.org](http://washburn.org)

Main: 1100 Glenwood Ave., Minneapolis MN 55405 | Northwest: 9100 85th Ave. N., Suite 100, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

West: 5050 Lincoln Drive, Suite 350, Edina, MN 55436 | Agency: 612.871.1454 | Fax: 612.871.1505





mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Steinmetz", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Steinmetz  
CEO  
Washburn Center for Children



[washburn.org](http://washburn.org)

**Main:** 1100 Glenwood Ave., Minneapolis MN 55405 | **Northwest:** 9100 85th Ave. N., Suite 100, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

**West:** 5050 Lincoln Drive, Suite 350, Edina, MN 55436 | **Agency:** 612.871.1454 | **Fax:** 612.871.1505

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members,

On behalf of Zumbro Valley Health Center, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - *Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support*.

Zumbro Valley Health Center is a community mental health center dedicated to enhancing the quality of care for under and un-insured clients by delivering integrated services that address full mental, medical, social and housing needs. We serve people in the 11 county Southeastern MN area. As a community mental (and chemical) health program and safety net provider, Zumbro Valley Health Center serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.

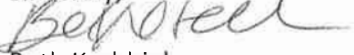
Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Zumbro Valley Health Center supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

Most importantly, the bill –

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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely,



Beth Krehbiel

CEO

Zumbro Valley Health Center

**Offices**

29 7th Street NE | Rochester, MN 55906

1620 Greenview Drive SW | Rochester, MN 55902

65 Main Avenue N | Harmony, MN 55939

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer



Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Guild is a service provider in the metro area, we offer integrated mental health, housing, and employment services to individuals living with mental illness and/or experiencing chronic homelessness.

Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Guild supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Bluhm', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Julie Bluhm, CEO

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of Minnesota Community Care, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Minnesota Community Care is a Community Health Clinic in St. Paul Minnesota. Our organization has been providing integrated health care for over 40 years to the community we serve, regardless of their ability to pay. About 1/2 of our Mental and Chemical Health team comes from the very diverse community we serve and we have made it a goal of our organization to recruit and grow our team from within the different communities we serve, as they understand the needs of those communities in a deeper way. As a community mental (and chemical) health program and safety net provider, Minnesota Community Care serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.

Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Minnesota Community Care supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely

Linda Dick-Olson, MSW,LICSW  
Director of Behavioral Health and Therapist



WOODLAND  
CENTERS

Community Mental Health Services



KANDIYOHI CENTER-MAIN OFFICE

P.O. Box 787

Willmar, MN 56201

320-235-4613 800-992-1716

FAX: 855-625-7406

Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 15, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of Woodland Centers, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Woodland Centers is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We are a comprehensive community mental health center established in 1958. We serve seven rural counties in the west central region of Minnesota - Chippewa, Big Stone, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Meeker, Renville, and Swift - with offices in each of those counties. Woodland Centers catchment area encompasses approximately 5000 square miles with a population of approximately 114,000. In 2020, Woodland Centers served approximately 6,650 unduplicated individuals whose ages ranged from 1 to 99. Woodland Centers' mission is to support people of all ages in finding hope and recovery. Our core values are willingness (we do what it takes), knowledge (we seek to understand, learn and grow) and leadership (we inspire change). At Woodland Centers, we believe connections transform lives. We create connections by partnering, serving and empowering each other in order to inspire courage, hope and lasting change.

As a community mental and chemical health program and safety net provider, Woodland Centers serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.

Our staff are key/critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities.

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Big Stone Center</b> P. O. Box 145 Ortonville, MN 56278 Phone: 320-839-8322 FAX: 855-867-8780	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Chippewa Center</b> P.O. Box 187 Montevideo, MN 56265 320-269-6581 FAX: 320-269-7045	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lac qui Parle Center</b> P.O. Box 493 Dawson, MN 56232 320-769-4864 FAX: 855-275-1310	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meeker Center</b> P.O. Box 55 Litchfield, MN 55355 320-693-7221 FAX: 855-825-0812	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Renville Center</b> P.O. Box 84 Olivia, MN 56277 320-523-5526 FAX: 855-675-6425	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Swift Center</b> 1209 Pacific Ave., #104 Benson, MN 56215 320-843-2061 FAX: 855-482-7868
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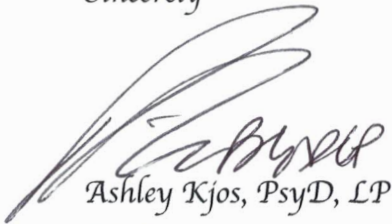
Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Woodland Centers supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

Most importantly, the bill -

- convenes a workgroup to address barriers in the current professional licensure process and consider an alternative licensure pathway.
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All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.

Sincerely



Ashley Kjos, PsyD, LP

CEO

Woodland Centers



Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members

On behalf of Mental Health Resources, Inc., I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.

Mental Health Resources (MHR) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) community mental health agency providing community-based mental health and substance use disorder services to more than 6,500 people with serious and persistent mental illness each year primarily in Ramsey, Dakota, and Hennepin Counties. MHR also serves people in St. Louis County and the 7 County metro area. MHR directly provides many of the community-based services that people with serious mental illness need to live in the community in settings of their choice. Services provided include, mental health targeted case management, Assertive Community Treatment, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, housing support services, adult rehabilitative mental health services, care coordination and a community support program.

As a community mental (and chemical) health program and safety net provider, Mental Health Resources, Inc. serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.

Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Mental Health Resources, Inc. supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.

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Sincerely

*Brenda K. Shores LICSW*

Brenda Shores, LICSW  
VP of Clinical Services, Mental Health Resources, Inc.

*Representative Peter Fischer, Chair  
Human Behavioral Health Policy Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
February 17, 2021*

*Dear Chair Fischer and Committee Members*

*On behalf of Minnesota Community Care, I am sending this letter to support Representative Vang's House File 970 - Culturally informed behavioral health training requirements and culturally diverse workforce development support.*

*Minnesota Community Care offers Mental, Chemical, and Health Services to underserved patients all over the St. Paul area.*

*As a community mental (and chemical) health program and safety net provider, Minnesota Community Care serves clients and communities who would not have access to mental and chemical health care.*

*Our staff are key/ critical to our ability to provide high quality care to our clients and communities. Our entire behavioral health system is facing a workforce crisis, with more providers retiring than are coming into the field. The shortage is particularly true for our communities of color, whose members face even more barriers to accessing care and inequities. Minnesota Community Care supports HF 970's proposal to further diversify our workforce through more diversity training and increased funding/ investment into education and training supports to allow more students and workers communities of color to enter the mental health workforce.*

*Most importantly, the bill -*

- *convenes a workgroup to address barriers in the current professional licensure process and consider an alternative licensure pathway.*
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*All the proposals in HF 970 are a first step, but an important first step, to bringing more diverse staff candidates into the mental and chemical health fields. Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health care needs of our diverse communities and our mental health care system in Minnesota. Please support House File 970.*

*Sincerely,*

*Amy Froiland-Parada, LICSW  
Mental Health Practitioner  
Minnesota Community Care*