



March 18, 2026

Representative Jeff Backer, Co-Chair
Health Finance & Policy Committee
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Robert Bierman, Co-Chair
Health Finance & Policy Committee
5th Floor, Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 5515

Dear Chairs Backer and Bierman,

On behalf of the Minnesota Dental Association, and as a member of the “Treat Yourself First” provider coalition, I urge your support for HF3978. This bill extends confidentiality protections to dental providers, among other health professionals, who participate in provider wellness programs.

A 2021 survey by the American Dental Association found that the percentage of dentists diagnosed with anxiety has tripled since 2003. Many reported feeling less in control of their work environment, experiencing heightened stress, and scoring high on depression scales. Burnout and stress-related conditions are increasingly impacting dental professionals, at times to the point of impairing their ability to practice safely and effectively.

Dentists often work in small or solo practices with limited access to peer support and mental health resources. The profession’s physical demands, long hours in static positions, precision-driven work, and the emotional toll of treating anxious patients all contribute to stress and fatigue. Without adequate support, these challenges can lead to burnout, early retirement, reduced patient access to care, and diminished quality of care.

Under current law, confidentiality protections apply only to physicians participating in provider wellbeing programs. HF3978 simply extends that same standard to all providers, including dentists. Dentists should be encouraged to seek care without concern that doing so could compromise their privacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Murphy".

Dan Murphy, MPP
Director of Government Affairs
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612-767-4255

About the Minnesota Dental Association

The Minnesota Dental Association is the voice of dentistry in Minnesota, representing practicing dentists. It is committed to the highest standards of oral health and access to care for all Minnesotans. Learn more at: www.mndental.org.