

March 1, 2020



Rep. Erin Koegel
445 State Office Building
100 Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Rep. Koegel,

As the Chief of Addiction Medicine at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC), I am writing today to thank you for your ongoing support of Minnesota's only addiction medicine fellowship and for authoring House File 1283. **The bill would hopefully provide funding for the fellowship housed between the University of Minnesota Department of Psychiatry and HCMC's addiction medicine department.**

There are 21.1 million Americans that have a substance use disorder. However, nationwide there are less than 2,000 physicians specially trained to treat them. Our addiction fellowship trains three physicians per year on caring for people with substance use disorder and other addictive disorders. The goal of the fellowship is to train physicians to become experts in the prevention, clinical evaluation, treatment, and ongoing care of those with addiction. With the lack of addiction medicine physicians, only 11% of people nationally are being treated for their addiction. There are 32 rural Minnesota counties that do not have any providers that have obtained the necessary federal approval to prescribe the drug Suboxone, a medication for addiction treatment. This shortage of specialists is threatening to stall a national movement to bring the prevention and treatment of SUD into the mainstream of American medicine at a time when millions of people with addictions have a greater ability to pay for treatment thanks to insurance.

We are requesting ongoing funding of \$275,000 to help train physicians in addiction medicine to treat Minnesotans in need. If we are provided ongoing funding, over time we hope to increase the number of residents to treat addiction. **Continual funding for the only Addiction Medicine Fellowship program in our state will strengthen the health care workforce and incentivize specialists to train and stay in Minnesota.**

If you have any questions, you can contact HCMC's contract lobbyist, Tara Erickson, at Tara@TGEconsultingmn.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Gavin Bart, MD, PhD
Chief of Addiction Medicine
HCMC