

March 10, 2021

Dear Chair Stephenson and members of the House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee,

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (“the Council”) writes this letter in support of House File 970, offered by chief author Representative Vang, to expand the supply of mental health practitioners in the state and improve their training and effectiveness when treating diverse communities, thereby creating conditions to improve the mental health and well being of many Minnesotans, including in Minnesota’s Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota’s API communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota’s API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly urge the passage of this legislation.

The additional capacity House File 970 would afford to addressing the mental health needs in our state, and ensuring that current and future practitioners are well versed in the needs of diverse communities, including API Minnesotans, is a positive investment ensuring that this legislation would address the deficiency in mental health capacity that has long posed a challenge in reaching our communities.

Too often the mental health needs of diverse communities are subsumed under broader economic, social, and cultural barriers, leaving many members of our communities untreated for their mental health needs. This has only been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the need for resources to be intentionally allocated to communities most in need.

This legislation would address these elements by expanding the number of mental health practitioners in the state while equipping them with the tools most needed to meet the needs of Minnesota’s diverse communities through culturally relevant and effective means.

We urge the passage of this important legislation to provide greater accessibility and effectiveness in mental health treatment for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans