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Dear Members of the Housing Finance and Policy Committee:

NAMI Minnesota would like to thank you for your efforts to make sure that everyone has a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home. Homelessness is a growing problem in Minnesota and people with mental illnesses are much more likely to experience housing instability or homelessness. HF 1077 makes much needed investments and important policy changes that will help more people find and keep their housing.

Here are the items that NAMI Minnesota supports:

- **Bridges Housing Voucher:** Increasing funding for this program by \$1.5 per biennium will help more people with serious mental illnesses and their families obtain housing. Bridges provides housing subsidies to people living with serious mental illnesses while they are on the waiting list for federal Section 8 housing assistance. As with Section 8, people on Bridges rent an apartment at the regular market-rate and pay 30% of their income for rent. The program provides vouchers to cover the balance. Bridges is administered by local housing authorities or other entities who manage Section 8 programs.
- **Shelter Resident Task Force:** Emergency shelters are a crucial part of the continuum of supports for people experiencing homelessness. With limited resources and more people than ever requiring emergency shelter, too many people are falling through the cracks and not getting the support they need. This important task force will bring together all the key stakeholders – including shelter residents and shelter providers – and make recommendations on how to improve the shelter experience for residents and create basic consumer protections for those who seek emergency shelter.
- **Tenant Protections:** Minnesota tenants often face a stacked deck when they are at risk of an eviction, particularly tenants of color and those with low incomes. HF 1077 includes many important tenant protections for tenants around expungement, fee reforms, and setting standards around the written notice of an eviction. NAMI would also like to highlight language that allows a tenant to terminate their lease with a two month notice if they require a higher level of care like a residential IRTS program or a foster care setting. Without this change, people with mental illnesses face an impossible choice where they must choose between seeking the treatment they need and risking an eviction or delaying the intensive mental health treatment they need.

Thank you for your hard work this session and support of people with mental illnesses. NAMI Minnesota urges you to support this legislation and its important supports for people with mental illnesses.

Sincerely,

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director

Sam Smith
Public Policy Coordinator