



January 30, 2023

Members of the House Health Policy Committee,

As President of the Minnesota School Psychologists Association (MSPA), I am writing in support of HF 905 authored by Representative Cheryl Youakim that would allow minors ages 16 or older to consent to nonresidential mental health services.

The mental health needs of young people in our state and nation are considerable and have been exacerbated by the pandemic. We are all seeing the troubling statistics pointing out the increase in mental health issues and suicidal thoughts experienced by students as they return to school from two years of instruction that often relied upon hybrid and distance learning models that isolated them from peers and staff. This is making an already challenging situation more precarious.

School district support personnel and school-based mental health clinics are often in the position to assist with students showing the greatest needs in terms of mental health challenges, but even in the best of times, the resources the school districts are able to dedicate to truly meet the mental health needs of all students simply are not there.

Students and young adults need flexibility in meeting their mental health needs and providing them with the opportunity to seek out nonresidential mental health services is a step in the right direction for achieving this goal.

MSPA thanks Representative Youakim for introducing this bill and your decision as Chair of the Human Services Policy Committee to hear it. MSPA will provide any further input you might seek as the 2023 legislative session continues.

Respectfully,

Damion Smith, President, Minnesota School Psychologist Association
Jessie Kember, President-Elect, Minnesota School Psychologist Association
Daniel Knewitz & Amanda Hensgen, MSPA Legislative Chair & Co-Chair