



Minnesota Psychiatric Society

Improving Minnesota's mental health care through education, advocacy, and sound psychiatric practice, and achieving health equity.

March 10, 2024

Dear House Public Safety Finance and Policy Members:

The Minnesota Psychiatric Society strongly recommends House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee pass HF 4366/SF4460 as written. Members of the task force (which included significant county representation) grappled with inevitable tensions around incentives, payment, and authority, but, in a statesman-like manner, unanimously agreed to the recommendations in the report. While all the recommendations have significant merit, we want to highlight the most crucial steps to take ASAP.

1. Lack of access to Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) beds has resulted in an untenable position for the hospitals in our state. ED boarding and lengths of stay numbering in years has critically impacted access by all others who need it.
2. Increasing access to services operated by DCT in the community is key to future success in the area of mental health care for those who need it most. It is abundantly clear that MN needs to do what it can NOW while simultaneously also beginning the process to build and pay for more as circumstances allow.
3. We must change the priority admission law now to allow for better access and efficiency of DCT beds while more capacity is built. This means empowering psychiatrists to use clinical criteria/judgement to decide which patients to transfer first for safety and which patients won't benefit from transfer and instead recommend more appropriate dispositions.
4. We must begin to administer necessary psychotropic medications to people incarcerated in jails ASAP while simultaneously begin the process of obtaining a waiver to allow Medicaid to pay for it.

If you have any questions please contact Linda Vukelich, Executive Director, Minnesota Psychiatric Society (l.vukelich@comcast.net) or Bill Amberg, Government Relations Counsel, Minnesota Psychiatric Society (Bill@amberglawoffice.com).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Trangle".

Michael Trangle, MD, DLFAPA
MPS Legislative Committee Chair