



MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Representative Tina Liebling, Chair
Health Finance and Policy
March 29, 2023

Chair Liebling and Health Finance and Policy Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Coalition of Licensed Social Workers (Coalition of Social Workers), we are writing about several components in House File 2930.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers. The Coalition of Social Workers unifies membership organizations for licensed social workers. Collectively, we work as mental health professionals, in child welfare systems, nursing homes, health care, home care settings, and residential care.

We appreciate a number of provisions in this bill. Specifically:

- Article 1, Sections 2 and 28 and Article 14, Section 3: Extending the eligibility of audio-only communication and parity for telehealth while the study is completed. This eliminates barriers vulnerable populations face while attempting to access mental health services.
- Article 3, Sections 119, 179, and 180: Establishing a system for stable funding for the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline. Our community is best served by a whole-person approach to health that includes emergency mental health support for those in crisis.
- Article 7, Section 24: Implementing a temporary bridging rate increase for outpatient MA and MinnesotaCare services, allowing clinicians to serve the mental health needs of the most vulnerable Minnesotans with fair payment while we wait for a more permanent solution.
- Article 8, Section 3: Supporting workforce development activities focused on recruiting, supporting, and training for mental health practitioners and professionals from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic communities. People seeking mental health support deserve the highest quality of care, and that includes the option to choose among professionals who share their identity and lived experiences.

As you review this bill in the coming days, we ask that you reconsider your investment in children's mental health. Specifically, House File 1198 included many important investments that would support our youngest Minnesotans. Please do not overlook this population.

Thank you for your work on this bill, and we appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

Karen Frees, MSSW, LICSW
Chair
Coalition of Social Workers

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN
Coalition of Social Workers