

Improve behavioral health care with simplified regulations

Issues

- Minnesota has a long history of innovation in community-based mental health services, with the goal of providing hope and recovery for individuals and families affected by mental illnesses. But regulations haven't always kept up with the changes, and some standards date to the 1950s.
- For example, the definition of "mental health professional" appears 47 times across Minnesota's statutes, rules and rule variances, including 10 substantively different versions that each contain at least one omission or error.
- Some mental health services are licensed, others are certified, and still others have no clear oversight. Different parts of the Department of Human Services may review the same provider at different times, creating inefficiencies and costs for the provider while making regulation and support more difficult.

Proposal

The Governor's budget recommends multiple steps toward reforming and simplifying regulations and standards for Minnesota's mental health care system:

- Create a common core of standards for all mental health care services and begin transitioning to a unified licensing structure, starting with residential crisis stabilization and intensive residential treatment services.
- Implement changes to diagnostic assessments and individual treatment plans to maintain focus on family engagement while reducing arbitrary barriers. Eliminate highly prescriptive requirements, giving providers more flexibility to reduce burnout and retain experienced supervisory staff.
- Establish new discharge standards for adult residential mental health programs to support more equitable service delivery.
- Continue working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders and return in upcoming legislative sessions to transition the remaining mental health care services to the unified licensing framework.

Benefits

- Better mental health care for people as we continue to streamline standards and regulation
- Providers can focus their efforts on the person and family who need services

Fiscal impact

- \$241,000 in FY 2022
- \$256,000 in FY 2023
- \$256,000 in FY 2024
- \$173,000 in FY 2025

Related information

- [Budget page 109](#)
- DHS [Behavioral health webpage](#)
- [DHS uniform service standards webpage](#)

DHS Communications: February 2021