

MARRCH is a member of the Mental Health Legislative Network (MHLN) which endorsed the following legislative principle for 2021 in their annual BlueBook.

Paperwork Reduction Process

Issue: Complicated and at times contradictory standards, as referred to under USS, make it difficult to administer and regulate community Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and mental health services. This has also resulted in excessive paperwork, diverting service provider time from client interactions. The paperwork reduction issues cannot be separated from the systems issues. The Behavioral Health Division of the Department of Human Services has repeatedly been unable to engage other relevant and necessary Divisions or Departments of Minnesota's administration in resolving these. There is also further need to respect the professional autonomy and parity in treatment of SUD, Mental Health, and Physical Health staff.

Policy Recommendations:

Legislatively mandate the participation of relevant divisions and departments in a systems review, with special focus on paperwork reduction. The work should be done with an eye to streamlining requirements, making sure data is obtainable, has reasonable chance of being accurate, and provides timely feedback to providers to help them voluntarily improve their process and treatment outcomes.

Legislatively mandate the integration of representatives of providers, funders and funding authorities throughout the process.

Preferably provide an experienced, external consultant to guide the process, translate between parties, and assure that views of all relevant parties are considered in the final result.

Below the Minnesota Psychological Association, another member, explains the role of the MHLN.

Minnesota Psychological Association has long participated in the Mental Health Legislative Network (MHLN). It is a group of thirty provider and advocacy organizations that support each other's work, and legislatively address issues related to mental health. The purpose of the group is to advance the understanding of and services to people with mental illness. The view is that as a group more impact can be had. It is the group that organizes Mental Health Day at the capitol each year. Often representatives from the Department of Human Services are in attendance, and occasionally legislators will attend. The MHLN meets weekly when the Minnesota Legislature is in session, and monthly when not in session. It is hosted by either the Mental Health America-Minnesota or NAMI-MN organizations. Their support includes testifying for one another's bills when needed, as long as they fit with the members' viewpoint. The MHLN does occasionally act as a unit to write letters of common concern to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, payer organizations, the Governor, legislators, and members of Congress.

Participation in the MHLN has been a great support for MPA. They have joined with us on concerns with payers in the past, testified for our bills, and generally provided a greater probability of bill passage. They were especially helpful in dealing with legislation that sought to allow physician assistants to be paid as mental health professionals.