



February 19, 2024

Dear Members of the Human Services Policy Committee:

NAMI Minnesota supports HF 3865 which makes changes to the statute governing Assertive Community Treatment (ACT). ACT teams are an important part of our continuum of community mental health services. ACT uses highly skilled multi-disciplinary teams that have relatively small caseloads.

ACT is designed to provide comprehensive psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation, and support to persons with serious mental illnesses to live independently in the community. Treatment plans center around a person's strengths, needs, and aspirations for the future and the teams provide comprehensive services.

People who are eligible for ACT must have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, major depressive disorder with psychotic features, other psychotic disorders, and bipolar disorder. In addition, they must have significant functional impairment, and have been a high utilizer of intensive services such as crisis services, hospitalization, or involvement in the criminal justice system.

The problem we are experiencing is that young adults with these mental illnesses that are involved in First Episode of Psychosis (FEP) programs are able to avoid hospitalizations or involvement in the criminal justice system. But when they are ready to be moved off the FEP program but need the intensity of an ACT team, they do not qualify because of the effectiveness of the FEP program.

This bill will allow an FEP team to decide that a person in their program needs the comprehensive services offered by an ACT team. The FEP staff typically work with a person for a couple of years, and many are able to live in the community without intensive services. But there are some, and the FEP staff know these individuals very well, who will need an ACT team in order to stay living well in the community. We don't want these young adults to lose ground once they are finished with the FEP program. This bill will continue to support them into the future.

We urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director



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