

March 18, 2022

Dear Senator Abeler,

I write today on behalf of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation to express our support for SF3355, a bill that adopts the Interstate Counseling Compact, and to also thank you for authoring this needed initiative.

Hazelden Betty Ford, established in 1949 in Center City, Minnesota, is the nation's largest nonprofit provider of comprehensive inpatient and outpatient substance use and mental health treatment for adults and youth. We provide lifesaving treatment to people across the country, both through telemedicine and on-site at our 17 locations, including those in Minnesota. The Foundation also encompasses our Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School of Addiction Studies, a publishing division, an addiction research center, recovery advocacy and thought leadership, professional and medical education programs, school-based prevention resources and a specialized program for children who grow up in families with addiction.

As a national system of care we applaud the Minnesota Legislature's 2021 adoption of PSYPACT, the interstate compact for psychologists, and strongly support the 2022 adoption of the Nurse Licensure Compact, as well as SF3355/HF3510 to adopt the Interstate Counseling Compact. The variable nature of state licensing for our substance use counselors across the country creates challenges for us as we grapple with a growing workforce shortage in Minnesota and nationally, as well as for our students as they graduate from Hazelden Betty Ford's Graduate School of Addiction Studies and seek employment.

The Counseling Compact would improve access to patient care by allowing our counselors in other Compact states to practice across state lines. Its passage would also provide needed flexibility in staffing within our own system and beyond as we battle the addiction and overdose crisis in our country. Finally, the Compact would support recruitment and retention of students and professionals to our field and serve to elevate and standardize licensing standards to the benefit of patients nationally.

We know our workforce challenges are greater than what the Counseling Compact alone can solve. That said, as an institution of higher education and the largest nonprofit substance use provider in the nation, we know its adoption is a significant step in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration and again thank you for your tireless advocacy on SF3355.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily Piper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Piper

Vice President, Government and External Affairs