

February 26, 2023

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, I want to express our support for SF 836 which permits young people, ages 16 to 18, to consent to outpatient mental health treatment. This bill will remove a barrier to access to care.

It can be difficult at times to obtain parental permission for treatment. Not necessarily because they are opposed to treatment but due to language barriers, time constraints, and negative attitudes towards mental health treatment. If young people are struggling with their mental health, we want them to reach out for help and to obtain that help without delay.

Youth can already consent to care in an inpatient unit, emergency or acute care. They should be able to consent to treatment before it becomes a crisis.

We are not concerned about the lack of parental consent. Good mental health professionals will always work to engage and involve parents in the treatment of their children. It is part of the healing process.

NAMI Minnesota urges your support for SF 836 especially during this difficult time that is negatively impacting our teen's mental health.

Sincerely,

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director