



Senator Melissa Wicklund, Chair
Health and Human Service Committee
March 14, 2023

Chair Wicklund and Health and Human Service Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN), we are writing in support of Senate File 1747, a bill that appropriates one-time funding to the Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato to establish a mental health training clinic.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers. We represent clinical social workers (LICSW) who make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota, social work educators training the next generation of providers, and social work students.

Social work is a professional degree that comes with extensive training and a requirement for direct practice experience. Graduate students pursuing their clinical license need internship settings that provide practical experience with appropriate supervision. The Center for Rural Behavioral Health training clinic will allow a convenient setting for social work students attending Minnesota State University, Mankato. This not only reduces transportation or other barriers for students completing their graduation requirements, it allows local university students an opportunity to serve their community.

Senate File 1747 will increase access to mental health providers in an underserved region. While residents of greater Minnesota have the same emotional challenges of the metro area, they have fewer providers who are trained to help. This will create jobs for licensed clinicians who can in turn, support the area's mental health needs. Tying the setting to the University with clinicians in training is an efficient model to expand direct services for local residents.

Senate File 1747 provides needed funding for initial start up costs. We appreciate your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen E. Goodenough'.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jenny Arneson'.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN