



Senator Melissa Wicklund, Chair
Health and Human Services
March 23, 2023

Chair Wicklund and Health and Human Services Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Society for Clinical Social Work (Clinical Society), we are writing in support of Senate File 926, a bill that establishes a mental health services rate increase bridge while waiting for the results of the rate study.

Clinical social workers (LICSW) make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota. NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers, and the Clinical Society is a professional group who advance the practice of clinical social work in Minnesota. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in mental health practice.

Currently providers are subsidizing the cost of mental health services to Minnesotans and just like the rest of the country, these providers are impacted by inflation which only compounds the financial burden. Delaying rate adjustments simply tells providers that they must continue this unsustainable financial arrangement with the state.

The increased need for mental health services is well documented, and we know we must attract more providers and retain the ones we have. We need to address rates with the same urgency we talk about meeting the mental health needs of Minnesotans. When providers earn only a fraction of the actual cost of delivering services, they can not reasonably attract the necessary workforce to serve clients well.

Clinical social workers want to serve the mental health needs of the most vulnerable Minnesotans. We are requesting fair payment for the services we provide while we wait for a more permanent solution.

Please support SF926. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Karen E. Goodenough in black ink.

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

Handwritten signature of James Stoltz in black ink.

James Stoltz, LICSW, LADC
Legislative Committee
Clinical Society

Handwritten signature of Jennifer Arneson in black ink.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN
Clinical Society