



Minnesota Hospital Association

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Submitted Electronically

Chair Wiklund and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA), we write in support of SF 1679 (Wiklund) which will help address critical health care workforce needs in Minnesota, particularly in the areas of mental health. Minnesota's hospitals and health systems have a current overall job vacancy rate of 21%, totaling nearly 10,000 open health care positions. Legislation such as SF 1679 provides necessary and important tools to continue addressing the dire need to recruit and retain Minnesota's mental health care and health care workforce.

SF 1679 will significantly resource both new and continuing efforts to address the unyielding demand for mental health services across Minnesota. Along with our members, MHA specifically supports the following provisions in the bill:

- Investing in growing the number of professionals, practitioners, and peers working in the field with a focus on diversity and having a workforce that is more culturally informed and responsive.
- Increasing funding for mental health professional loan forgiveness programs.
- Creating a special program to train pediatricians in mental health.
- Increasing funding for the mental health provider supervision grant program.
- Establishing a mental health professional scholarship grant program.
- Creating and funding a Youth Care Professional training program for people working in direct care with youth in residential settings.

MHA supports SF 1679 (Wiklund) and urges the legislature to continue efforts to recruit and retain more health care professionals and increase investments in programs designed to address adolescent and pediatric mental health needs.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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