



National Association of Social Workers

## MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Senator Melissa Wicklund, Chair  
Health and Human Services  
March 31, 2023

Chair Wicklund and Health and Human Service Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Coalition of Licensed Social Workers (Coalition of Social Workers), we are writing about several components in SF 2995.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers. The Coalition of Social Workers unifies membership organizations for licensed social workers. Collectively, we work as mental health professionals, in child welfare systems, nursing homes, health care, home care settings, and residential care.

We appreciate a number of provisions in this bill. Specifically:

- Article 1, Section 37: Implementing a temporary bridging rate increase for outpatient MA and MinnesotaCare services, allowing clinicians to serve the mental health needs of the most vulnerable Minnesotans with fair payment while we wait for a more permanent solution.
- Article 2, Section 7: Extending the eligibility of audio-only communication and parity for telehealth. This eliminates barriers vulnerable populations face while attempting to access mental health services.
- Article 4, Section 42, Article 5, Section 11, Article 9, Section 1: Supporting workforce development activities focused on recruiting, supporting, and training for mental health practitioners and professionals from diverse racial, cultural, and ethnic communities. People seeking mental health support deserve the highest quality of care, and that includes the option to choose among professionals who share their identity and lived experiences.
- Article 4, Section 47: Establishing a system for stable funding for the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline. Our community is best served by a whole-person approach to health that includes emergency mental health support for those in crisis.
- Article 9, Section 9: Establishing a crisis response program for youth and families to reduce out of home placements.

As you review this bill in the coming days, we ask that you reconsider your investment in children's mental health. Specifically, Senate File 1174 included many important investments that would support our youngest Minnesotans. Please do not overlook this population.

Thank you for your work on this bill, and we appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

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