



## Minnesota Psychiatric Society

*Improving Minnesota's mental health care through education, advocacy, and sound psychiatric practice, and achieving health equity.*

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February 9, 2023

Dear Higher Education Conferees,

I am the President of the Minnesota Psychiatric Society (MPS) and a forensic psychiatrist caring for patients in Minnesota. I want to share my perspective on provisions surrounding the Addiction Medicine Fellowship and to advocate for *HF1339/SF1269* which will support the addiction medicine fellowship.

MPS represents over 450 psychiatrists practicing in communities throughout the state in health systems, academic centers, including jails and prisons, and often with underserved populations. The mission of MPS is to improve Minnesota's mental health care, including addiction, through education, advocacy, sound psychiatric practice, and achieving health equity. There are too few physicians, either psychiatrists or primary care providers, to fill the need in the state of Minnesota. MPS supports the continuation and expansion of the Addiction Medicine fellowship, which trains physicians of all specialties in the care and treatment of persons with addiction and other mental health disorders.

The impact of COVID has been profound on the mental health and addiction communities. Rates of alcohol use, opioid use, opioid deaths, and methamphetamine use and deaths has increased dramatically in the past year. The Minnesota Department of Health noted a rise of drug overdoses in of 30% in the first half of 2020 as compared to 2019 and an increase of 70% in 2020 in the same month as 2019. The opioid epidemic, COVID epidemic, and recent sharp rise in methamphetamine and cocaine use highlight the critical nature of having a work force to treat these problems. Because of a limited number of trained addiction medicine physicians, only 11% of persons with addiction receive treatment.

In my role as a psychiatrist, I have seen the impact of addiction on patients with devastating addiction, but also on our health system in terms of overdose deaths and the compounding strain on already limited resources. I am keenly aware of the impact of substances on the health and development of young persons; an estimated 90% of addiction begins in adolescence or in young adulthood. Addiction fellows train in prevention and early intervention, which is key to making an impact in the lives of youth, and proactively addressing the need to prevent future crisis.

Consistent funding has not been available to train these physicians, limiting the number of trainees. The requested funds in this bill will create stipend and program support to better serve the citizens of Minnesota with addiction, often complicated by mental health conditions.

Please pass this funding for our state and the Minnesotans in need of treatment for addiction.

Thank you,

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Matt Kruse in black ink.

Matt Kruse, MD, FAPA  
MPS President

Handwritten signature of Michael Trangle in black ink.

Michael Trangle, MD, DLFAPA  
MPS Legislative Chair