



# Minnesota Alliance of Rural Addiction Treatment Programs

February 20, 2023

Sen. John Hoffman, Chair  
Senate Human Services Committee  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2111  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hoffman and members of the Human Services Committee,

The Minnesota Alliance of Rural Addiction Treatment Programs (MARATP) is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that seeks to bring together diverse rural interests to address and advocate for strong addiction treatment programs throughout Greater Minnesota. Formed in 2017, MARATP advocates for legislation and policies that strengthen the health and well-being of rural Minnesotans, and improve rural access to higher quality, lower cost health care. We are writing you today to provide some information as to how S.F. 2 (Mann) will impact rural substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers across the state.

First and foremost, MARATP appreciates and supports the sentiments behind this proposal. We see every day the impact that economic stability, time with family, and physical health have on our client's recovery process. The ability to remove some of the strains and stressors by ensuring access to paid leave can only be seen as a positive for our clients as they work to better their circumstances and manage their chronic substance use and mental health issues. We also appreciate what this might mean for our employees, particularly our counselors, who too often must balance a professional life they find rewarding with navigating the uncertainties of their own family situations. However, MARATP does have some concerns about how S.F. 2 might impact SUD treatment providers, particularly those in greater Minnesota.

The vast majority of MARATP's members rely on public program reimbursement to provide high quality SUD treatment services. We represent the SUD safety net and generally do not have private or cash pay clients who might be able to help us cost-shift and cover the additional payroll taxes contemplated by this proposal. Therefore, as the Minnesota Legislature looks to assemble its health and human services budget for the upcoming biennium, we respectfully request that you increase Medical Assistance reimbursement for SUD service to cover the additional payroll costs.

Additionally, MARATP has concerns that increased utilization of extended paid leaves will only exacerbate the ongoing shortage of licensed mental health and SUD treatment professionals. Rural providers are particularly impacted by the ongoing shortage (and increased rates of burnout) for our clinicians. While we believe the leaves provided in S.F. 2 might help with long-term retention, we have very real concerns about what it means

for providers attempting to satisfy licensing and reimbursement requirements, particularly in residential settings, if they have staff out for extended periods of time. We understand there is no easy solution to this problem, but we also know that thousands of Minnesotans rely on MARATP members each year to help them navigate the uncertain path to recovery.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and your support of the recovery community.

Sincerely,

Marti Paulson, President

Minnesota Alliance of Rural Addiction Treatment Programs

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