



February 29, 2024

Dear Members of the Senate Education Policy Committee:

NAMI Minnesota supports SF 3746 which will require state standards for health education. It's important for students in Minnesota to receive factual information in a developmentally appropriate manner. All subjects follow state standards, except for health.

Included in health standards is mental health education. At a time when so many students are struggling with their mental health it's important to have state standards on the information students should receive about mental health, mental illnesses, and suicide prevention. For example, information presented on suicide in the wrong way could promote contagion or further stress for a student.

We hope that in a future legislative session work could be funded to develop curricula on mental health education. There are very few programs across the country that are available and have any research behind them. While NAMI Minnesota provides education to middle and high school students – reaching over 9,000 students last year - there isn't really any curricula that could be given to schools to carry out.

We support this bill to begin moving in the right direction. State standards will make it easier to develop curricula. Our students need good information to identify symptoms in themselves and others and to know what steps to take.

Thank you for your attention to this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director



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