

February 22, 2024

Chairs Kunesh and Koytza-Witthuhn,

I am writing on behalf of RHA (Reproductive Health Alliance), in support of the Health Standards Bill (SF 3746/HF 3682).

RHA is a coalition of more than 40 reproductive and sexual health clinics, advocacy organizations and individuals across the state of Minnesota. Our clinics are designated as essential community providers by the Minnesota Department of Health. We provide affordable access to medical care including contraception, HIV and STI testing and treatment and evidence based information to the most vulnerable populations across the state.

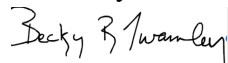
We support comprehensive health education standards. In fact, one of our strategic priorities for 2024 is to foster messaging around medically accurate, evidence-based health information.

Comprehensive health education standards are important to reproductive and sexual health work, ultimately aiding students in making informed choices about their health and well-being. The lack of a requirement to provide comprehensive, medically accurate sexual and reproductive health education has had dire consequences for youth and young adults in our communities. At a time when all of MN is seeing a continued epidemic of chlamydia, and resurgence of syphilis and gonorrhea, youth account for a disproportionate number of cases (6.5% of population making up 24% of chlamydia cases and 14% of gonorrhea).¹

The 2023 legislative increase in funding and change in language to the SRHS grant (Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, formerly FPSP) allows RHA clinics, including school-based clinics, to provide medically accurate education in K-12 schools in MN.

Revised health education standards that include evidence-based health information are critical to helping Minnesota students strengthen their health literacy skills. We support SF 3746/HF 3682.

Sincerely,



Becky R. Twamley, RPh, MPS
Board co-Chair, RHA

¹ . MDH, STD and HIV/AIDS Surveillance System. Surveillance Statistics 2021