



MINNESOTA SOCIETY for Clinical Social Work

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
March 5, 2024

Chair Wiklund and Health and Human Services committee Members,

Thank you for your attention to mental health needs. On behalf of the Minnesota Society for Clinical Social Work (Clinical Society), we are writing with comments for your consideration on SF4124.

The Clinical Society is a group of professionals who together advance the practice of clinical social work. We represent clinical social workers (LICSW) who make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota,

Licensed independent clinical social workers (LICSW) join psychologists, psychiatrists, marriage and family therapists, and licensed professional clinical counselors as mental health professionals defined under 345I.04. In addition to an advanced degree from an accredited social work program, clinical social workers must demonstrate 200 hours of consistent supervision over a period of 4000-8000 hours with at least 1800 of those hours in a clinical setting, plus another 360 clocked clinical hours in six areas of clinical knowledge.

In other words, clinical social workers have spent years training in the speciality practice of mental health diagnosis and treatment. Other mental health professionals have had equally rigorous training.

While we share the concern about a lack of mental health providers and feel an urgency to act, we want to make sure anyone offering mental health diagnosis is well equipped with the proper training. It does not appear that physicians assistants have that training. A proper diagnosis is critical in treatment for mental illness.

Social workers are appreciative of this committee's support in other ways of expanding our profession, including expanding alternative licensure pathways. As you move forward in developing solutions to the mental health crisis through expanded practice, we urge you to support options that include in-depth training for professional providers.

Sincerely,
James Stolz
Legislative Committee Chair
Minnesota Society for Clinical Social Work