



February 23, 2024

Dear Members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the more than 10,000 members of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), I am writing in support of SF 3973, that will work to modify sober home requirements surrounding (1) access to opioid antagonists; and (2) access to legally prescribed and dispensed or administered medications such as those used to treat co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health conditions.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), drug addiction is considered a *physical or mental impairment*, and the ADA prohibits discrimination against people in recovery from opioid use disorder (OUD). The protections apply to those individuals who are not engaging in illegal drug use, and this includes those who are taking legally-prescribed medication to treat their OUD (e.g., medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) or medication assisted treatment (MAT)).

The MMA recognizes that access to opioid antagonists such as naloxone, a drug which reverses opioid overdose, is a crucial tool for reducing drug-related overdoses. As such, increasing access to opioid antagonists in sober homes is critical, as residents in these settings have a history of substance use disorder, and are likely to benefit from access.

The MMA also recognizes that MOUD is the main treatment for patients with opioid use disorder. Providing access to MOUD in a sober home setting will help residents to reduce withdrawal and cravings; prevent opioid overdose, decrease use of non-prescribed opioids, decrease infections secondary to injection drug use, and save lives. We believe that Minnesota should increase access to MOUD across all healthcare and community settings – sober homes included.

As a society, we have failed to recognize that addiction is a chronic disease. Persons in recovery from substance use disorders meet the civil rights definition of “disabled” under the ADA, and SF 3973 will help ensure that Minnesota is in compliance with the ADA, and that we are affording individuals in recovery with the opportunity to seek the care necessary to address a disease that is too often ignored. I urge members to support SF 3973.

Sincerely,

Laurel Ries, MD  
President, Minnesota Medical Association