

February 23, 2024

Senator John Hoffman  
Chair, Human Services Committee  
2111 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Jim Abeler  
Republican Lead, Human Services Committee  
2207 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: SF 3973 and Sober Homes**

Dear Chair Hoffman, Senator Abeler, and Members of the Human Services Committee,

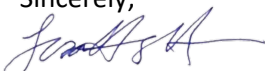
The Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (OMHDD) has a statutory mission to promote the highest attainable standards of treatment, competence, efficiency, and justice for persons receiving services for mental illness, developmental disabilities, chemical dependency, or emotional disturbance.

OMHDD strongly supports SF 3973. We thank the co-authors of this important bill codifying critical health and safety consumer protections for residents of sober homes. As a state agency that receives far too many reports of death due to overdose, OMHDD emphasizes the need to ensure easy access to lifesaving opiate antagonist medications. Having the medication on site, but unavailable in an emergency when every second counts, is woefully insufficient. To save lives, these medications must be in an easily accessible location and administered as soon as possible.

OMHDD also appreciates SF 3973 addressing other medication concerns in these settings. Medication for opioid use disorder is an evidence-based treatment that saves lives and promotes recovery. The Department of Justice has made clear that denying access to medication assisted treatment to an individual with a substance use disorder is discrimination prohibited by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Incorporating the medication provisions of this bill into the sober home statutory framework preserves and protects the rights of sober home residents to make medical decisions, including medications for their substance use or co-occurring mental health conditions, with trained and licensed prescribers without compromising their access to sober homes.

OMHDD applauds SF 3973 for adding these essential health, safety, and rights protections to sober home settings.

Sincerely,



Lisa Harrison-Hadler

Ombudsman

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