

Written/Oral Testimony in Opposition to S.F. 3973 (Mann)  
Minnesota Senate Human Services Committee

February 26, 2024

Chair Hoffman, Senator Mann, and Human Services Committee Members,

Good Afternoon and thank you for your time, my name is William Lycan and I am the Executive Director of the Minnesota Association of Sober Homes (also known as MASH), a non profit dedicated to certifying, inspecting, training, and supporting sober housing in our state.

MASH supports Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) and instructs homes on how to properly supervise such medications. Medication can be instrumental in an individual's recovery. For some however, these same medications could be their drug of choice.

A primary reason why an alcohol or drug dependent individual chooses to live in a sober home is because they are separated from their drug of choice. This drug free environment gives them the freedom to cement their recovery. Other individuals may choose to live in an environment free of other drugs, regardless of their legality or medical uses.

It is absolutely critical that we all embrace a "yes and" approach to recovery. Every recovery journey is unique, with many variations in structure, faith, program, and medication.

We commend DHS's commitment to person centered practices. To use their language: person centered practices "encourage informed choice and creativity." This bill plainly restricts informed choice.

A one size fits all approach to recovery will not work. If the state wishes to support medication assisted sober housing, there are many better alternatives besides mandating another model out of existence.

This bill would not allow a resident to make the choice for themselves what substances surround them early in their recovery.

We say yes to emerging harm reduction models and we say yes to the Twelve Step abstinence-based Minnesota Model of Care. We can and should have both. This way, residents can determine which pathway is best for them instead of those of us sitting in this room. Only then will we be supporting person centered practices.

We urge you to strike the medication mandate from SF 3973. Thank you.