

## Testimony in support of SF3984 (Abeler)

Dr. Kevin Doyle, LPCC, President/CEO, Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School, Center City, MN

Date: March 11, 2024

My name is Kevin Doyle, and I serve as the President of the Graduate School at Hazelden Betty Ford. We were founded in 1999 to train addiction counselors, and we are an accredited higher education institution, having graduated over 1100 students since our founding. We are celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2024.

I am pleased to write/speak in support of SF3984. This bill would facilitate workforce expansion for those treating substance use disorders by providing another academic option (a master's degree, in addition to the currently required bachelor's degree) for those pursuing licensure as alcohol and drug counselors (LADCs) in Minnesota. A bachelor's degree would remain acceptable as well; the proposed change simply adds the master's degree as an option as an additional route to licensure. Coursework requirements would not change.

At a time when Minnesota and the nation face unprecedented levels of overdose deaths and the need for quality treatment is higher than ever, adding more ways for individuals to enter the workforce as licensed professionals is essential.

Thank you for your consideration.