



March 20, 2024

Sen. John Hoffman, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2111
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: 245D and 144G rental license exemption in SF 4399

Dear Chair Hoffman and members of the Senate Human Services Committee,

The Residential Providers Association of Minnesota ("RPAMN") is a 501(c)(6) non-profit trade association that represents small, residential customized living and waivers service providers in Minnesota. RPAMN has roughly 200 provider members and subscribers, with the vast majority being BIPOC-owned, culturally-specific service providers who might not otherwise be engaged in the policy development and legislative processes.

We are writing you to express our support for the inclusion of the rental license exemption proposal for 245D and 144G state licensed settings operating in single family homes (Article 1, Sections 1 and 2 of SF 4399). We have been appreciative of the Chair and committee members' concern with the incident in the city of New Hope and the dedication to prevent further instances of discrimination.

This proposal gets to the root of the problem: municipalities using revocation of rental licenses as a tool for discrimination and over-regulating providers who serve people with disabilities and/or mental health conditions. In the example of the city of New Hope, the city's revocation of a provider's rental license resulted in a violation of all resident rights and protections with only 30 days' notice to vacate, and it put the provider out of business. The fear of rental license revocation puts providers in difficult positions when it comes to deciding whether to call emergency services, like the police, or they must turn away clients who may have high acuity mental health needs because they do not want to give their city a "reason" to revoke their license. With the desperate need for hospital decompression, we see these municipal rental licenses as a major barrier to getting people out of the hospital. Additionally, this disproportionately impacts BIPOC providers providing culturally specific care in suburban communities.

Municipal rental licenses are duplicative and do not add any value beyond the regulation of state licenses from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Human Services. Many major cities in the metro and municipalities throughout the state already exempt these settings from rental licensing. This proposal will ensure uniformity in how cities treat 245D and 144G licensed settings across the state and it will prevent further misuse.

We know this committee prioritizes the right for people with disabilities to live in the community and in the setting of their choosing. Thank you for your support of this proposal and for your support of the rights of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Zahnia Harut, President

Residential Provider Association of Minnesota