

April 16, 2024

Dear Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

Thank you for your work to assemble the omnibus human services finance bill. We know it wasn't an easy task. NAMI Minnesota would like to provide these comments on the bill.

We support:

- Eliminating parental fees. This has been an issue since the 1980s and creates hardships for families.
- Changing how long a MNChoices assessments can be used to establish service eligibility from 60 days to 1 year
- Requiring training for direct care staff and supervisors in assisted living facilities to have training on mental illnesses, trauma, crisis resolution, suicide prevention, and de-escalation. So many of these programs do not want to admit people with mental illnesses.
- Allowing an exception to the budget for the elderly waiver when people need more services
- Providing a grant to Otter Tail County for the voluntary engagement program
- Creating a MI&D Civil Commitment Reform Task Force that includes NAMI to analyze the law and resources and develop recommendations

We greatly appreciate adopting many of the recommendations from the Priority Admissions Task Force. This was a difficult issue to reach consensus on. We believe it's important to include new criteria to determine who needs the state operated bed the most (acuity, length of time on wait list, safety, etc.), allow 10 people committed from community hospitals to be able to access Direct Care and Treatment (DCT), and increase funding to expand resources at DCT. The task force needs to continue its work to monitor implementation and develop recommendations around the 48-hour timeline.

NAMI Minnesota wishes you could have included funding for providing technical assistance to jails and for delivering injectable medications. People wait for months in jail until they are committed, and we might be able to support their recovery with injectable medications. Additionally, we believe that a family member of someone committed as MI&D should be on the MI&D task force. Lastly, we believe that someone from tribal government on the executive board for DCT.

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the bill.

Sincerely,



Sue Abderholden, MPH  
Executive Director