



March 6, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), representing more than 10,000 physicians and physicians-in-training across the state, I am writing in support of SF 1085, legislation that highlights the critical role that maternal mental health screenings can play during the perinatal period.

Maternal mental health disorders are the leading cause of death among pregnant and postpartum women, with **suicide and overdose** as the primary drivers. The U.S. has the highest maternal mortality rate among developed nations, with the economic burden of untreated maternal mental health conditions reaching **\$14 billion**, or approximately **\$31,800 per mother-child pair receiving care**. An estimated 75% of women impacted by a maternal mental health disorder do not receive the treatment they need. Furthermore, maternal mental health diagnosis **afflicts women in all demographics and locations in Minnesota**, with **Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and multi-race communities at a higher risk** for developing a maternal mental health crisis.

SF 1085 supports the creation of maternal mental health programs that are evidence-based; ensures that healthcare providers are fully reimbursed for screenings, diagnosis, and treatment coordination; and that the maternal mental health programs will provide healthcare providers with the necessary resources and referrals to ensure timely and effective care.

According to research published in *The Lancet*, “untreated maternal mental health disorders have been shown to be associated with adverse birth outcomes, such as stillbirth and preterm birth, and detrimental effects on infant development, including cognitive, behavioral, and psychomotor issues, which in turn increases the risk of neuropsychiatric disorders in later life.”

Maternal mental health screenings are crucial because they allow for the early identification and intervention of potential mental health issues in pregnant and postpartum women. When it comes to the pre- and postpartum period, a mental health issue that is left undiagnosed and/or untreated can have long-term health effects on the child’s development, as well as on the health of the mother. The physical and mental well-being of the mother and child are of the utmost importance, and routine maternal mental health screenings can positively contribute to optimal health for both.

Senate File 1085 will ensure that Minnesota is able to provide effective maternal mental health screening programs during the perinatal period - an important step in protecting the health and wellbeing of pregnant women, postpartum women, their child, and their families. I urge you to support Senate File 1085.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwin Bogonko', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edwin Bogonko, MD
President, Minnesota Medical Association