

Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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March 31, 2025

Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave West
St Paul, MN 55103

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the over 1,000 members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP), I am writing in strong support of SF 831.

When seeing patients, pediatricians often discuss the importance of addressing and treating mental health. However, when it comes to members of our own profession, we often don't take our own advice. Pediatricians pour our hearts and souls into caring for children and their families, it is easy to neglect our own mental health and well-being. National data indicates that 60% of healthcare workers report symptoms of burnout. This can develop into severe mental health concerns including depression and anxiety, and suicidal ideation or attempts. Sadly, according to national survey data, more than 50% physicians know another physician who has considered, attempted, or died by suicide. This is a concerning fact that must be addressed by increasing awareness and reducing stigma around healthcare workers getting mental health treatment.

The stigma surrounding mental health treatment within our profession is pervasive. Many pediatricians feel reluctant to seek help due to fears of judgment or the potential impact on their careers. This silence only perpetuates a cycle of suffering and reduces capacity to provide compassionate care to patients. Reducing burnout and addressing stigma surrounding mental health treatment is not just beneficial; it is essential.

Thank you for taking the time to hear this important piece of legislation. I strongly urge your support for SF 831.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Smentek".

Katie Smentek, MD, FAAP
President, Minnesota Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics