

March 31, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

NAMI Minnesota strongly supports SF 2743, providing audio only telehealth. People with mental illnesses use audio only for a variety of reasons and find it effective.

NAMI Minnesota conducted a survey in 2024 about the use of telephonic or audio only care. 176 people from Minnesota responded to the survey. Some were conducted over the phone with their answers being recorded in Survey Monkey. No one wanted to participate in a focus group. We did post times over zoom but no one attended. Asked to rate their experience with audio only for a mental health visit between 0 and 10 with using a phone call for a mental health care visit, 82.4% rated their experience 6 and above.

Some of the reasons people liked telephonic care:

- o Convenience, Easy to use
- o Avoided need to travel, could take the call from anywhere, helpful in the winter
- o Anonymity, protected my privacy
- o Helped when an appointment was forgotten
- o From the comfort of my home
- o Helpful when in crisis – can connect quickly
- o Provided flexibility in scheduling
- o Didn't have to worry about how I looked or body language
- o Helpful if you have agoraphobia
- o Helpful when video isn't working or Internet

Some concerns that people had:

- o Hard to trust a person you couldn't see
- o Not personable
- o At times difficult to understand or hear the mental health professional
- o Left wanting a more personal connection
- o Difficult when you can't see the reaction to what you are saying
- o Experienced more interruptions from others (phone viewed differently)
- o Felt like the therapist was multi-tasking instead of focused on the session
- o Difficult if someone else starts calling

While phone calls might not suit everyone, they offer a valuable alternative for those seeking mental health support with flexibility and convenience. As someone wrote "If you're having a bad day and feel like you can't even get out of bed, you don't have to get dressed up, you can just have a phone call and speak to your provider." NAMI Minnesota urges you to support this bill.

Sincerely,



Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director