



National Association of Social Workers

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

Senator John Hoffman, Chair
Human Services
March 24, 2025

MINNESOTA SOCIETY
for Clinical Social Work

Chair Hoffman and Human Services Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Society for Clinical Social Work (Clinical Society), we are writing in support of SF2647, a bill that expands the substance abuse treatment providers to mental health professionals with training in the subject matter.

Clinical social workers (LICSW) make up the largest group of mental health providers in Minnesota. NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing nearly 2000 social workers, and the Clinical Society is a professional group who advance the practice of clinical social work in Minnesota. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in mental health practice.

Social workers make up the largest group of mental health professionals in Minnesota. Licensed independent clinical social workers (LICSW) are trained in diagnostic assessments, including substance use disorders, and in the screening for all of the co-occurring disorders required in the comprehensive assessment. Social workers with LICSW qualifications frequently work in substance abuse settings and yet, in a Medical Assistance licensed SUD program under MN Statutes Sec. 245G, only licensed alcohol and drug counselors (LADCs) are authorized to provide treatment. It hinders our work with clients when we limit the duties of professionals with similar qualifications.

We support strong and appropriate licensing laws that ensure protection for the public. Yet, we must balance this with supporting our professionals by ensuring our regulations are up to date, and accurately reflect updated best practices so that we have the workforce we need to support individuals struggling with substance abuse. Licensed social workers with established clinical scope have the skills necessary to provide comprehensive assessments and treatment coordination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

James Stolz, LICSW, LADC
Legislative Committee
Clinical Society

Cc: Senator Jim Abeler