



March 28, 2016

Dear Legislators:

NAMI Minnesota strongly supports HF559, legislation that would increase the income eligibility limit and asset limits for people on Medical Assistance. Requiring people to spend-down their income to 80% of the federal poverty level in order to be eligible for Medical Assistance places a huge barrier to people being able to afford to live in the community.

The spend-down makes it difficult for people who are living barely above the poverty level to choose to pay for their medications or medical treatment. The 2016 poverty level, effective July 1st for a single person is \$11,880 or \$990 a month. If a person's income were just \$12,000 a year, they would need to spend \$208 a month towards their medical bills. Often someone is choosing between food or rent and their mental health treatment. For providers, they are placed in a terrible dilemma because they know the person needs treatment in order to live in the community and yet they know the person cannot afford the spend-down.

People with mental illnesses need to be encouraged to choose treatment so that our communities can benefit from the gifts they have to offer. NAMI Minnesota urges the committee to support this important bill.

Thank you for considering our comments and please contact me with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH  
Executive Director



800 Transfer Road, Suite 31, St. Paul, MN 55114  
Tel: 651-645-2948 or 1-888-NAMI-HELPS [www.namihelps.org](http://www.namihelps.org)