



March 1, 2022

Dear Members of the Preventive Health Policy Division:

NAMI Minnesota is writing to support HF2156 which would prohibit the use of conversion therapy with children and vulnerable adults.

NAMI Minnesota and every single major mental health organization – the psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors – support a ban on the use of conversion therapy. Even the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – SAMSHA – issued a report against the use of conversion therapy.

The reason for the opposition to conversion therapy is easy. Therapy is used to treat the symptoms of mental illness such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. Being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer is not considered a mental illness, so there is no illness to treat. The idea that same-sex attraction and orientation among some adolescents is in any way abnormal or mentally unhealthy has no support among any mainstream health and mental health professional organizations.

The use of these so-called therapies, particularly on youth, to change their sexual orientation can cause serious potential to harm young people and is viewed by mental health professionals to be dangerous. Lack of support for youth, or rejecting who they are, has a negative impact on their mental health, including leading to depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, and suicide.

There are no studies demonstrating the efficacy of this treatment. It's time to put a stop to these therapies and support the mental health of young people who are exploring, defining and articulating their identity. Please support this bill.

Sincerely,

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

Sue Abderholden, MPH  
Executive Director



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