

January 25, 2021

Dear Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, we would like to express our support for HF 269. This important legislation would create a psychology interjurisdictional compact that will make it easier for people with mental illnesses to receive treatment via telemedicine. While this legislation was a priority for NAMI Minnesota before the COVID-19 pandemic, the stress of social isolation and distance learning has significantly increased the demand for mental health treatment and especially telemedicine.

More people than ever need mental health treatment, but the development of our mental health workforce is still lagging. Low reimbursement rates, hurdles to obtaining licensure, and challenges finding a supervisor are all key factors in our long-term workforce challenges. We need to tackle these problems, but HF 269 is an important start that will rapidly expand the pool of psychologists that can provide treatment in our state.

As more mental health services are offered remotely, there have been new logistical hurdles for both providers and patients. The compact will allow psychologists to practice across state lines and in under-served communities, while ensuring that these providers are qualified to provide mental health treatment. We have heard many stories from our members about the disruptions in care when someone moves to a new state. College students, for example, could not continue receiving support from their psychologists while they are in school in another state. This legislation would also allow for someone to meet with their psychologist while traveling or caring for a relative in another state.

The psychology interjurisdictional compact will increase access to mental health services, reduce the logistical burden for mental health providers to offer services across state lines and provide an urgently needed expansion to our mental health workforce. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director

Sam Smith
Public Policy Coordinator