



To: Dr. Penny Wheeler and members of the Health Care Delivery Design and Sustainability Workgroup of the Health Care Financing Task Force
From: Minnesota Psychological Association

Re: Recommendation to provide financial and technical assistance to expand EHR adoption and health information exchange by smaller providers, especially behavioral health

Date: 11/6/15

Dear Dr. Wheeler and workgroup members,

The Minnesota Psychological Association applauds your focus on the need to invest in the health information exchange process in Minnesota. We are writing to ask that you recommend to the full health care financing task force support for financial and technical assistance for smaller healthcare providers, especially behavioral healthcare providers.

People with serious and persistent mental illness die on average 25 years earlier than their same age peers. Mental illness, therefore, is a crucial social determinant of healthcare outcomes, due in large part because coordinating health care across providers is especially difficult for people with mental illness. They are less effective in communicating their healthcare needs and history, and are more likely to change providers and living situations, making the need for seamless health information exchange between all providers even more essential for this special population.

Behavioral health providers must be more integrated into the network of providers with access to interoperable systems in order to offer the best and most cost effective treatment for patients with mental illness. Additionally, the information that behavioral health providers hold must be available to other medical providers so that the health of our mentally ill citizens is not compromised. Most behavioral health providers recognize this crucial role of health information exchange. Only a very small minority of providers will choose not to participate. In order for behavioral health providers to become integrated fully into the health information exchange process, the significant but surmountable financial and technical barriers must be addressed.

As representatives of the Minnesota Psychological Association, we ask that you reconsider putting forward a recommendation to the full health care financing task force to provide financial support and technical assistance to small providers. This is a pivotal

need that requires a small investment from the health care financing task force but with enormous impact on patient care and the health outcomes of our citizens.



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