



## **Operating Guidelines**

**Goal:** The goal of the Mental Health Legislative Network is to advocate for a statewide mental health system that is high-quality, accessible and has stable funding.

### **Objectives:**

- To build awareness about mental health public policy issues
- To act as a clearinghouse and serve as a collective resource on mental health public policy issues
- To coordinate advocacy and lobbying strategies
- To pool our knowledge, resources, and strengths to create change
- To work out disagreements prior to or during the legislative session
- To keep the needs of children and adults living with mental illnesses and their families at the forefront of all decisions

### **General Policies and Practices:**

- Any member organization working to introduce a bill to the legislature that affects the mental health system must share it with MHLN for feedback. Opportunity will be available to attempt to resolve concerns or disagreements.
- Each organization has one vote, but we strive for consensus.
- Bills receiving MHLN support must be “voted on” and all organizations must be notified prior to the meeting that a vote will be taking place. Calls or e-mails related to the vote are acceptable. To support a bill there must be no objections.
- A lead organization will be assigned to key issues/bills and will update the MHLN on its progress.
- Meetings with key leadership and relevant committee chairs should be held with MHLN executive committee members being invited to attend when possible.

### **Overall Expectations of MHLN Members**

- All MHLN members are required to pay dues each year to remain members.
- Each organization must commit to activate its grassroots work/individual network when agreed to by MHLN.
- Every member is expected to publicize DOTH within their organization and attend.

- New organizations may be permitted to join MHLN if a majority of MHLN's existing members approve.
- Organizations that do not participate fully in MHLN or do not carry out the goals of MHLN may be asked to leave.

#### **Meeting Practices/Expectations:**

- Meetings will be held once per month, except during session, when they will be held once per week.
- Those attending meetings are required to identify themselves in meetings, including the organization they represent.
- Discussions at MHLN meetings are private and should not be shared outside of the meetings.
- Organizations with contract lobbyists must declare any conflict of interests at each meeting and cannot participate in meetings where they have a conflict.

#### **Leadership of MHLN**

- Co-chairs of MHLN are NAMI Minnesota and Mental Health Minnesota.
- The co-chairs of the MHLN will take the lead on the Day on the Hill and development of the Blue Book – securing space for the event, scheduling buses, and arranging for printing.