



Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

Representative Tina Liebling, Chair
Health and Human Services Finance Committee
MN House of Representatives
June 15, 2020

Dear Chair Liebling and Members of the Committee

On behalf of our community mental health centers and programs, the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is affirming our support of the extension of DHS waivers.

Community mental and chemical health providers are urging you to address the crucial need to stabilize access to services for our clients through telemedicine when safety concerns remain under COVID-19. We need the ability to stabilize services and programs under this alternative delivery mode until we can guarantee safety for in-person services again. We strongly believe it is critical for clients to access care and keep health coverage while COVID-19 remains a public health threat, even beyond the peacetime emergency. In this, we are advocating for passage of proposals to sustain services and access to care, including:

- Enact emergency authorities into state law and allow 60-days following the end of the peace time emergency to end flexibilities
- Permit waivers enacted under the emergency to continue beyond the state peacetime emergency authorities that are required by federal law or enable to receive enhanced federal funding
- Continue certain waivers until 2021 to ensure continuity while COVID-19 is impacting service delivery, even if there is not a peacetime emergency in place

Further, we are seeing the efficacy and positive impact of more flexible regulations and expanded modes of service for our clients and communities. We support the thoughtful continuation of the waiver authorities beyond the peacetime emergency and ability for providers/ service agencies to use their best clinical judgment in applying them, including:

- Suspending application requirements for economic assistance programs (CV03)
- Allowing phone or video visits for waiver programs (CV15)
- Expanding access to telemedicine services for Children's Health Insurance Program, Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees (CV16)
- Allowing telemedicine alternative for School-Linked Mental Health services and Intermediate School District Mental Health services (CV21)
- Allowing phone or video use for targeted case management visits (CV24)
- Expanding telemedicine in health care, mental health, and substance use disorder settings (CV30)
- Allowing partial waiver of county cost when COVID-19 delays discharges from DHS- operated psychiatric hospitals (CV31)
- Allowing flexibility in housing licensing requirements (CV38)
- Expanding remote Home and Community Based Services waiver services (CV43)

As MACMHP, **we believe** access to high-quality mental and chemical health services is vital to realizing whole health and well-being for all Minnesotans. **Our purpose** is to lead the transformation of the healthcare system so everyone has access to high-quality, community-based services. In our belief and purpose, MACMHP: **Advocates** for our members and their clients with the legislature, stakeholders, and the public. **Drives Innovation** to create a more equitable and sustainable mental and chemical health system through service delivery and payment reform. **Collaborates** and connects to elevate high quality, whole-person care and to develop innovative care models.

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- Allowing remote delivery of adult day services (CV44)
- Modifying certain requirements for Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI) services (CV50)
- Allowing flexibility for personal care assistance (PCA) service oversight and hours (CV53)
- Modifications to community mental health center certification requirements (CV64)

We look forward to working with the Committee for the future passage of these waivers and proposals during this Special Session.

In closing, thank you for the work you are doing to support our state's community-based providers, our clients and communities, especially during this time of emergency.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jin Lee Palen'.

Jin Lee Palen

Executive Director

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