



February 28, 2023

Representative Peter Fischer
Chair, Human Services Policy Committee
200 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Fischer and Members of the Committee:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) writes in support of HF 1436 and HF 2058, to establish a cultural and ethnic minority infrastructure grant program to destigmatize and uplift the mental health of underserved communities in Minnesota. The PN-3 Coalition is excited to see significant investments in the mental health workforce to uplift families of all backgrounds in Minnesota which will positively position children and families for a lifetime of prosperity.

Culturally responsive strategies and programs are needed to address maternal health disparities and improve health outcomes in communities of color to ensure all Minnesota babies and families have a chance at a strong start at life, regardless of race. These bills invest in training and education about adverse childhood experiences and children's mental health to increase awareness about the lifelong impact of childhood trauma. As over 80% of the brain is developed before the age of three, early interventions are needed to address and remedy mental health concerns and correct developmental delays. By targeting resources to invest in mental health education, screenings, care, and treatment for families, young children have greater opportunities for future healthy growth and development.

Uplifting providers who work with marginalized communities increases the availability and capacity of these critical trauma-informed professionals, care and services. By investing in culturally appropriate mental health and substance use disorder professionals and organizations, this grant program will address and reduce mental health disparities by increasing access to culturally competent education, care, and treatment for the whole families.

It is essential we invest in the mental health workforce to ensure trauma-informed mental health services are accessible and culturally appropriate. Please join us in supporting HF 1436 and HF 2058 to support the healthy growth and development of young children in Minnesota and ensure they have access to culturally specific mental health resources throughout their life.

Thank you,

Deb Fitzpatrick,
Children's Defense Funds-MN,
Co-Chair

Nancy Jost,
West Central Initiative,
Co-Chair

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,
MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition,
Coalition Coordinator