



AMHERST H.
WILDER
FOUNDATION

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451 Lexington Parkway N
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651-280-2000
Fax: 651-280-3000
www.wilder.org

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Chair Shultz and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

On behalf of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation and our team of community mental health providers, I urge you to support H.F. 635.

School-linked mental health services make a tremendous difference in the lives of Minnesota children living with mental illness. Over half of the students served by school-linked mental health services have never accessed mental health care treatment before, and half of those students were found to have a serious mental illness.

Our schools have become a de facto entry point to care and treatment. After COVID, this will be more important than ever.

These programs make a difference by identifying and treating children early, and in a setting that is most conducive to recovery and stability for the whole family. Kids stay in school, and parents stay at work. However, not enough schools currently have access to these critical services. In order to give children the best possible start in life, we strongly encourage the continuation and expansion of school-linked mental health services.

As students statewide return to in-person schooling, referrals for mental health care are coming in at staggering rates. No doubt, children and their families have experienced incredible challenges this past year: isolation, changing family roles, financial and housing instability, and disruption in socialization and academics. When families decide it's time to seek mental health services, having a school-linked provider on-site is critical to meeting their needs. With your support of this appropriation, that vision becomes reality.

Now is the time to commit to our children.

Please support this bill.

Sincerely,

Pahoua K. Yang, MSSW, PhD, LP, LICSW
Vice President, Community Mental Health & Wellness
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation