



January 9, 2023

Representative Noor, Chair
Human Services Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Professional Distinction

Personal Dignity

Patient Advocacy

Chair Noor and Members of the Human Services Finance Committee,

With 22,000 members, the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) is the leading voice for professional nursing in the State of Minnesota. As leaders in labor and health care, we are a voice for hospital nurses around the state on issues related to the health and well-being of the public and see the impacts of the lack of a functioning mental health system every day in hospitals across the state. This is why MNA strongly supports HF 564- Children's School-linked Mental Health Grant Funding. Nurses know that early intervention in youth with mental health challenges is vital for their ability to be successful. Half of all mental illnesses emerge by the age of fourteen. If these children wait until they are adults to begin receiving treatment, they will have waited too long. Untreated or undertreated mental illnesses have numerous negative impacts and increase the likelihood that the child or youth will be suspended, drop out of school, or end up in the juvenile justice system.

One of the most important community-based programs for children is school-linked mental health. Under this model, community-based mental health providers co-locate in the school-building to provide on-site mental health treatment. Half of all students who receive school-linked mental health treatment received care for the first time, with half of these students having a serious mental illness. Early intervention and access to comprehensive mental health treatment at school and in the community is significantly important.

Without this important investment for youth in Minnesota, children and young adults will continue to end up in emergency departments and inappropriately boarded in our hospitals, further exacerbating their mental health challenges and stressing our healthcare system. HF 564 provides funding for necessary and effective evidence based mental health programming that will provide a positive impact throughout our state for generations. As such, the Minnesota Nurses Association wholeheartedly supports this legislation.

Sincerely,

Shannon M. Cunningham
Director of Governmental and Community Relations
Minnesota Nurses Association

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