

# Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



## Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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February 20, 2023

Human Services Committee  
State Office Building  
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members of the House Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the nearly 1,000 members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing in strong support of HF 1198. As pediatricians, we have seen firsthand the impact that mental health can have on children and adolescents. We know that mental health is a critical component of overall health and wellbeing, and that investing in youth mental health is essential to ensuring that young people have the tools and resources they need to lead healthy and happy lives.

There is no question that recent years have been particularly challenging for young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended many the lives of many children, from disruptions to their education to social isolation and economic hardship in their families. These challenges have placed an enormous strain on mental health, with increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation being reported across the state and nation.

The pediatric community understands that mental health can have a profound impact on a child's physical health. For example, children who experience chronic stress are more likely to develop a range of physical health issues, from obesity to heart disease. By investing in youth mental health, we can help prevent these physical health issues.

Investing in youth mental health can also impact the existing health disparities experienced by too many children in Minnesota. Children who grow up in traditionally marginalized communities are more likely to experience mental health issues, which can in turn make it more difficult to succeed academically and develop socially. By providing young people with the support they need to overcome these challenges, we can help address these disparities.

MNAAP believes that investing in youth mental health services is essential to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to lead a healthy and happy life. We urge legislators to prioritize this critical issue and work together to build a brighter future for our youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen Crespo".

Eileen Crespo, MD, FAAP  
President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics