



Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

Representative Jennifer Schultz, Chair
Human Services Policy and Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
April 6, 2021

Dear Chair Schultz and Committee Members

On behalf of Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP), I am sending this letter to support HOUSE FILE 2127 – omnibus human services budget bill.

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is the state's leading association for Community Mental Health Programs, representing 34 community-based mental health providers and agencies across the state. Collectively, we serve over 200,000 Minnesota families, children and adults. Our mission is to serve all who come to us seeking mental and chemical health services, regardless of their insurance status, ability to pay or where they live. As Essential Community Providers, we serve primarily culturally diverse, low-income, uninsured and public healthcare program insured Minnesotans, who cannot access services elsewhere. We serve our clients with comprehensive, coordinated care and love.

We thank you and the Committee for including critical provisions to sustaining mental health and substance use disorder care, including:

- Proposals to increase services reimbursement and support – adult and children's mental health grant funds, culturally responsive rate increase for substance use treatment
- Proposals to address mental health workforce diversity and equity
- Proposals to address regulatory alignment and streamlining in Mental Health Uniform Service Standards (USS) and SUD paperwork reduction

Specifically, we thank the Chair, Committee Members and Bill Authors for your support of Mental Health Uniform Service Standards (USS), and we ask you to support the inclusion of several recently addressed provisions in the behavioral health services across stakeholders, including:

- Allowing support and information from families and loved ones of someone in mental health crisis responses
- Providing for community mental health centers (CMHCs) ability to offer as much support from doctoral mental health professionals as we can while recognizing long-standing workforce shortages and challenges. We appreciate the concerns raised by the Psychologists and Psychiatrists. But, requiring CMHCs to staff a higher standard than current law will endanger funding and the ability to serve our communities. We welcome further conversation, especially on how to support CMHCs in making the transition to the CCBHC model where there are higher staffing requirements *and* higher resources to pay for those staff.

This has been a good process of bringing together stakeholders from the Department of Human Services, the provider community, counties and the advocacy community come together to work on this proposal with the shared end goal of improving access to high quality services for Minnesotans. We look forward to continuing the collaboration as this omnibus bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely

Jin Lee Palen

Executive Director

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