

TO: HEALTH AND FINANCE POLICY COMMITTEE

March 17, 2023

Dear Health and Finance Policy Committee,

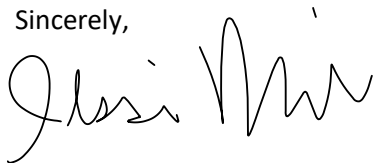
I am writing to provide my support for [HF 2930](#). This proposal supports funding for more mental health promotion programs and school-based health centers.

Access to affordable care is imperative in supporting pediatric community health. Uninsured or underinsured children are most at risk of experiencing health access barriers, resulting in poor health and education outcomes. The income and employment loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in about half of the United States' children being covered by Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (Alker & Brooks, 2022). When the pandemic health emergency period ends, it is estimated that 375,000 children will lose Medicaid coverage in Minnesota (Minnesota DHS, 2023), affecting their ability to afford and access healthcare.

School-based health centers diminish access barriers through proximity and familiarity with users (e.g., children and families). Positioned strategically where children spend most of their weekday hours, SBHCs interrupt social structural access inequities because of their unique location. Research evaluating SBHCs demonstrates that school-based initiatives improve health outcomes in children regardless of their entwined social determinants and insurance status (Allison et al., 2007; Arenson et al., 2019; Keeton et al., 2012). Compared to community-based and private clinics, SBHC users are more likely to utilize preventative and mental health care, have higher immunization rates, and have fewer emergency department visits and hospitalizations (Allison et al., 2007).

I urge you to consider this legislative proposal as a solution to improve health equity for Minnesota children and adolescents. Thank you for your support and important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Mieh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Dr. Jessica Mieh, DNP, MSN, RN, PHN  
Founder and Director, Rise Up Health Clinics  
Associate Professor of Nursing, College for Women Baccalaureate Nursing Program Director, St.  
Catherine University