



OPTIONS

Family & Behavior services

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Letter of support for HF3215

I am writing on behalf of **Options Family & Behavior Services**, we are a CTSS Adolescent Day Treatment program that services co-occurring youth with mental health and substance use disorder(SUD). The COVID 19 crisis has caused severe problems for the providers of adolescent services, and more are occurring even after the COVID 19 crisis is starting to subside. Many of our adolescent clients in Day treatment settings depend on MA / PMAP contracted transportation or school district-based transportation that is in a hiring crisis also.

Our colleges and masters' programs are accepting and graduating fewer and fewer graduate level counseling, social work, or psychological practitioners every year, and these practitioners are the staff who work the front lines to provide the children's mental health services, competition is great, and the rates paid by the MA/PMAP focused providers are the lowest by far, meaning these MA/PMAP providers are not able to compete with other providers for the practitioners based on wages. Mental Health practitioner positions have been posted for months with few applicants and without being filled, I fear that we will see many programs close in the next months.

I would like to see HF3215 pass, but also need to see a longer term, automatic rate increase occurring yearly that is tied to the cost of living that would eliminate the need for children's programs to beg for the money needed to provide the services that many in the legislature have worked so hard over the years to put in place.

It would be a shame to have finally gotten the best plans and services in place, but no providers to implement them.

Respectfully and thank you for your time

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