

March 7, 2023

Representative Dave Pinto
503 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 1198 (Hanson, J.) Family-Centered Children's Mental Health Bill

Dear Chair Pinto and committee members,

On behalf of Allina Health, we are writing to express our strong support for HF1198, which would help support and expand the continuum of children's mental health care in Minnesota.

Allina Health is an integrated health system that provides services for approximately one-third of Minnesotans across the care continuum. We provide mental health and addiction care for more than 100,000 patients through inpatient services in geriatric, adult and adolescent programs, outpatient services in ambulatory care, adult day treatment, and adolescent partial-hospital treatment. Allina Health is also a proud member of the Mental Health Legislative Network (MHLN), which is made up of more than 40 organizations working together to improve the state's mental health system.

Access to mental health services is challenging for all populations, and we continue to see increased demand for services for children and adolescents while at the same time seeing declining availability of community services and supports, and uncertainty of finding the appropriate care for their unique and dynamic needs, leading to longer stays in our emergency department.

HF1198 has several provisions that will help support and expand the continuum of care for children seeking mental health care in Minnesota, there are a few we would like to highlight. The first is the inclusion of the Mental Health Innovation Grant Program, which will provide funding for children who are boarding in hospitals and other nontreatment settings to receive individualized mental health care for their unique needs in the community. When a child is boarding in a hospital, it means they are not receiving the appropriate level of care for their unique needs. This funding will lead to better and more appropriate levels of care for children, as well as alleviate unnecessary stress from our emergency rooms and hospitals—allowing them to care for more patients. Second, we'd like to highlight our support for Child and Adult Transition to the Community supports. This program will also help children access treatment or services in the most appropriate community setting for their individual needs and challenges. Finally, we'd like to highlight the funding and support for expanding Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) capacity and allowing specialization and licensing of additional PRTF services. PRTFs and the services they provide are an important part of the care continuum and ensure children have the services they need when they need them.

Thank you for supporting this legislation and children across Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Clubb, MSW, LICSW
Vice President Operations
Mental Health and Addiction Service



Mary Beth Lardizabal, DO
Vice President
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