



African American Child Wellness Institute

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2100 Plymouth Ave. North, Suite #245, Minneapolis, MN 55411 Phone 612-302-3140

April 21, 2022

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

RE: SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR HF 3372

My name is Al McFarlane, Chair of the Board of Directors at the African American Child Wellness Institute (AACWI). I am joining Dr. BraVada Garrett-Akinsanya to urge you to fully fund AACWI. Right now, the Omnibus Health and Human Services Budget Bill has \$1M allocated to AACWI for fiscal year 2023. We are asking that you fund AACWI at the \$2.95 M level for fiscal year 2023. We are also asking that you fund AACWI at the \$2.95 M level for fiscal years 2024 and 2025, respectively. These amounts will support AACWI's operational capacity as an organization that can provide important and effective services for children and their families in the African American community in Minnesota.

Using a strength based and ecological **African-Centered Wellness Model** in service offerings, AACWI (since 2008), has been a key participant in the **Cultural Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Grant (CEMIG)**. The CEMIG program is dedicated to supporting ethnic and culturally specific organizations in Minnesota in the areas of **Clinical and Ancillary Services** that connect uninsured and underinsured children and their families to cultural-specific mental health providers and services, **Capacity Building for Licensure Services** for African American clinicians to gain training and clinical supervision in culturally congruent, trauma-informed, evidence-based practices, and **Community-Based Outreach Services** to provide culturally specific psychoeducation about behavioral health to children and their families via public education programs and activities.

The mental health of people of African descent has been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism. Having access to culturally specific care that is provided by African American mental health professionals is key to helping people of African descent excel on their journey to wellness.

The needs of the African American community are so great, and we are requesting that you, please, consider fully funding this important program by adding our amendments/requests to the State's budget in the Ways and Means Committee.

Thank you so much for your kind consideration.

Alvin McFarlane
Chair, Board of Directors
President, McFarlane Media Interests
Editor-in-Chief, Insight Newspaper

BraVada Garrett-Akinsanya, Ph.D., LP, LIC
CEO & Executive Clinic Director
African American Child Wellness Institute

Board of Directors

Dr. Pearl Barner, II former

University of Minnesota – Retired Director of the Boynton Health Service
Assistant Vice Provost of the Office of Multicultural Affairs

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