

Representative Tina Liebling  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives

March 7, 2023

Ms. Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Denise Moody and I am a social worker in Rochester. I have a unique blend of positions that allow me to work part-time with Rochester Public Schools and part-time at Winona State University in the school of Graduate Social Work.

I am reaching out in support of House Bill 1175. This bill would allow for schools to more easily access federal Medicaid dollars for mental health services in schools. Right now Minnesota has more restrictive guidelines than required to be able to access these funds by requiring school districts to be certified as a CTSS (Children's Therapeutic Support and Services). This would require school social workers to do all of the paperwork required for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and all of the paperwork required for community mental health providers.

In Rochester, data from the Minnesota Student Survey administered in May 2022, showed that 32% of RPS 11th graders have seriously considered suicide and 11.2% have actually attempted suicide. This is higher than the state average with 26.4% of students seriously considering suicide and 8.8% actually attempting suicide. This is up from 2019, when 26.7% of RPS 11th graders reported seriously considering suicide and 9.4% of RPS 11th graders reporting a suicide attempt.

**Given the overwhelming mental health needs of our students, why would we ask our providers to double the amount of the work to access Medicaid funds?** This bill would allow us to receive reimbursement from the federal government for support to students that we are already providing and would allow us to increase our support to students to address mental health needs.

The Department of Human Services has not been a partner in considering for how to increase access to federal Medicaid funding. They are clinging to requirements that could be changed, in fact guidance from CMS is encouraging them to make but they are unwilling to consider. We need legislative action to be able to access this additional funding. Please see [this link](#) for additional guidance from CMS dated August 18, 2022.

House Bill 1175 will provide more mental health services to children, youth and families that struggle to access services outside school and allow schools to access funding that will increase the number of staff they are able to employ. In Rochester alone, we estimate that this change could bring in an additional \$923,000 that could be utilized for additional mental health providers **AND the thing that many fail to realize is that this would be at no cost to the state. This would be fully funded by the federal portion of Medicaid!**

I respectfully request that you support this bill so that we can better support our students and families who are suffering with mental illness.

Respectfully,

Denise Moody, MSW, LICSW