

February 21, 2025

Dear Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, I am writing to support HF 958, which would add collaborative care as a Medicaid funded service.

Nearly every corner of Minnesota is seen as a mental health workforce shortage. We simply do not have enough mental health professionals to meet the needs. These shortages lead to long wait lists and unfortunately can result in people experiencing a crisis before receiving mental health care.

The collaborative care model delivers mental health care in a primary care setting. It uses a team approach of a primary care provider, a mental health case manager and a consulting psychiatrist. It can connect people more quickly to needed mental health services. This model also builds up the knowledge and confidence in the primary care provider so that they feel more comfortable treating mental illnesses.

This model has demonstrated its effectiveness in improving health outcomes and in being cost effective. We urge your support for HF 958.

Sincerely,

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director

Making Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) a Medicaid Benefit in Minnesota

(S.F. 8 Boldon/H.F. 958 Nadeau)

Challenge: Minnesota is facing a mental health and substance use crisis among people of all ages and backgrounds, and underserved communities are disproportionately impacted.¹ As of February 2021, 37% of adults in MN experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression.² Access to treatment continues to be a challenge, with 80% of MN counties qualifying as mental health professional shortage areas.³ Remarkably, only about 25% of people receive effective mental health care, including in primary care settings, where the majority of treatment occurs.⁴ Insufficient access to mental health and substance use treatment has significant costs for individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole.

Solution: The Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) is an evidence-based, cost-effective approach to behavioral health care that integrates mental health professionals into primary care settings. Covered by Medicare since 2017 and nearly all commercial payers since 2019, CoCM has a clear pathway for long-term financial sustainability and increasing treatment access. **Thirty-seven states already cover CoCM through their Medicaid programs.** However, CoCM is not currently reimbursed as a Medicaid benefit in Minnesota. CoCM supports Medicaid's focus on improving care coordination, reducing costs, and addressing social determinants of health.

Request: Make Minnesota the 38th state with a CoCM reimbursable Medicaid benefit:

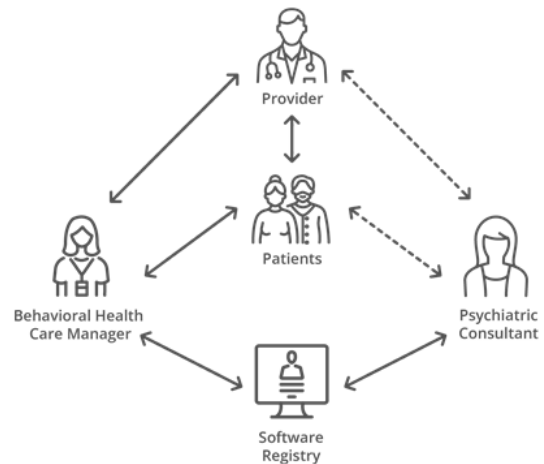
- **Mandate Reimbursement for CoCM Codes:**
 - Require Minnesota Medical Assistance and Prepaid Medical Assistance Plan (PMAP) contracts to reimburse the full suite of Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) codes.
 - **Establish Sustainable Reimbursement Rates:**
 - Make payments to the treating medical provider at rates no less than the current Medicare reimbursement rate.
 - **Allocate Resources for CoCM Startup and Training Costs:**
 - Appropriate \$500,000 annually to the commissioner of DHS for grants that facilitate startup and incentivize adoption of CoCM.
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Why CoCM?

- **Improved outcomes:** Over 90 studies support the efficacy of CoCM to provide faster, more sustainable mental health care than other approaches, providing care where it's needed most—in primary care settings. Embedding behavioral health in primary care removes traditional barriers to mental health services, such as long wait times and inconvenient appointment times, particularly in underserved areas.
- **Cost savings:** Every **\$1 spent on CoCM saves \$6.50** in reduced healthcare costs and improved productivity.⁵
- **Sustainable reimbursement attracts providers:** Sustainable rates incentivize primary care clinics to offer the service, attract and retain behavioral health professionals, and address barriers to accessing psychiatric care. Primary care providers gain expertise in managing mental health, enhancing their ability to provide holistic care.

What is the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM)?

The CoCM is a team-based, evidence-driven approach to managing mental health and substance use conditions in primary care settings. It combines the expertise of primary care providers, behavioral health care managers, and psychiatric consultants to deliver comprehensive care. This model is proven to improve outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and enhance the overall quality of care for patients.



- **Primary Care Provider (PCP):** Oversees the patient's overall care and works closely with the behavioral health team.
- **Behavioral Health Care Manager:** Provides care coordination, supports patients through evidence-based interventions and frequent touchpoints, and monitors treatment progress.
- **Psychiatric Consultant:** Offers expert guidance to the PCP and Care Manager to refine treatment plans and make medication recommendations.

These organizations support making CoCM a Medicaid benefit in MN with sustainable rates:



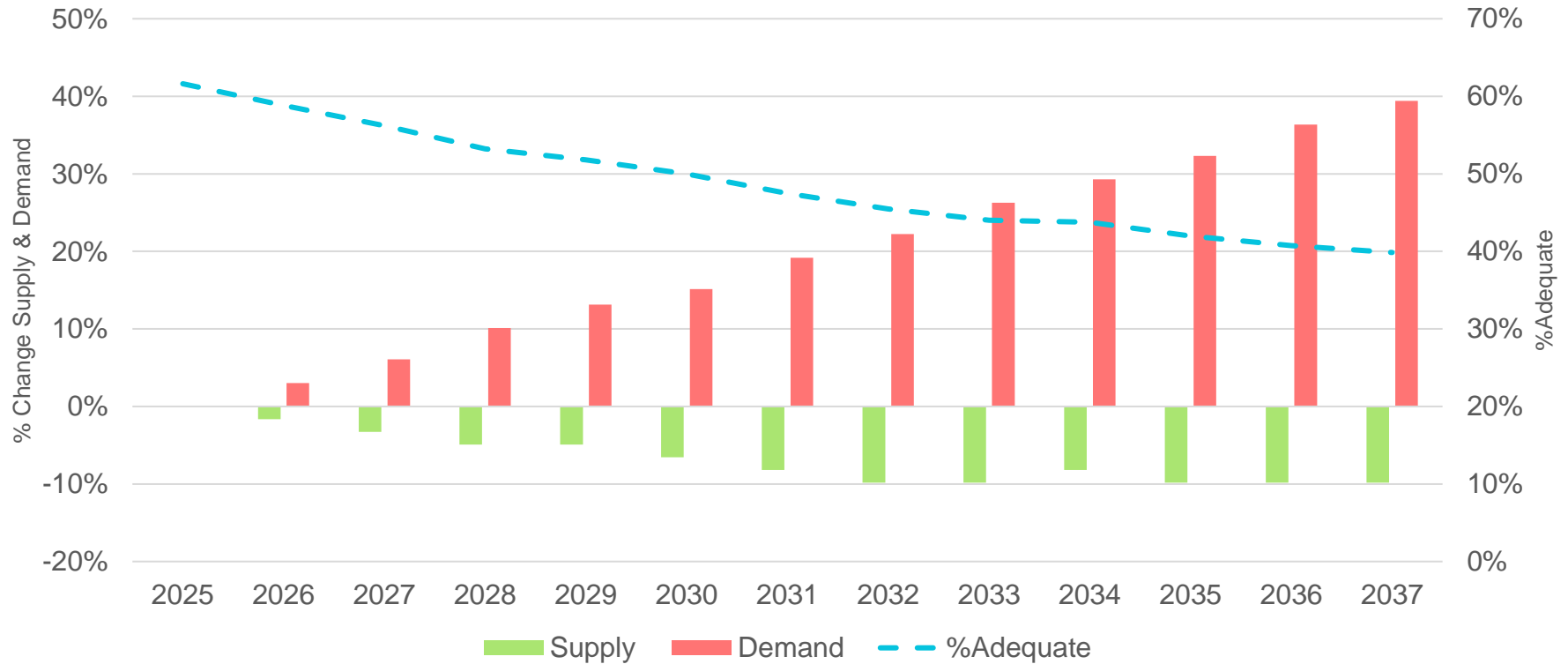
For additional information contact: Tyler Winkelman (tyler.winkelman@hcmcd.org), Amy Koch (akoch@momentumadvocacy.com, 763-300-8492), Izzy Rojas (irojas@momentumadvocacy.com, 612-262-4922), or Michael Trangle (mbtrangle@gmail.com)

References:

1. <https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/minnesota/>
2. <https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/MinnesotaStateFactSheet.pdf>
3. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/facilities/ruralhealth/docs/summaries/rhcmn.pdf>
4. https://www.chcs.org/media/HH_IRC_Collaborative_Care_Model_052113_2.pdf
5. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/advocacy/state-affairs/model-cocm-legislation>

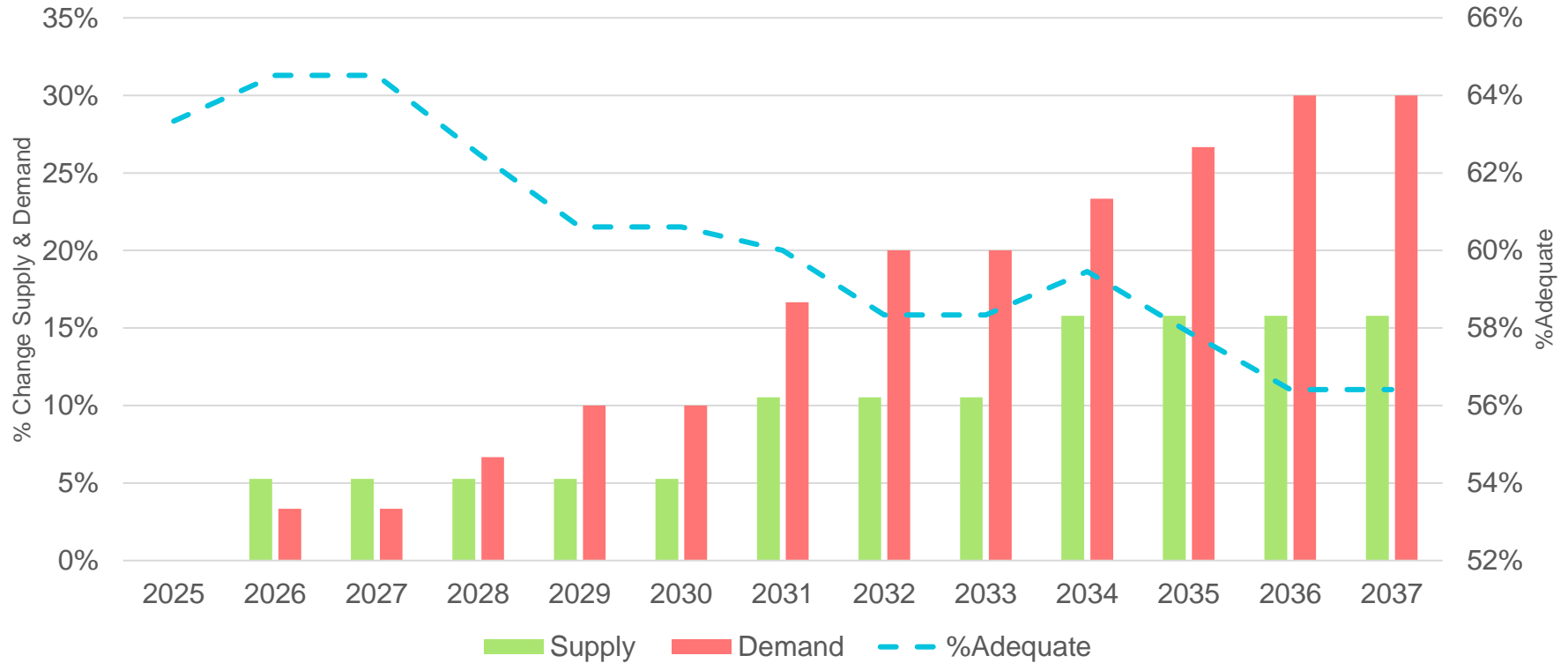
Minnesota Adult Psychiatrists

% Change in Supply & Demand

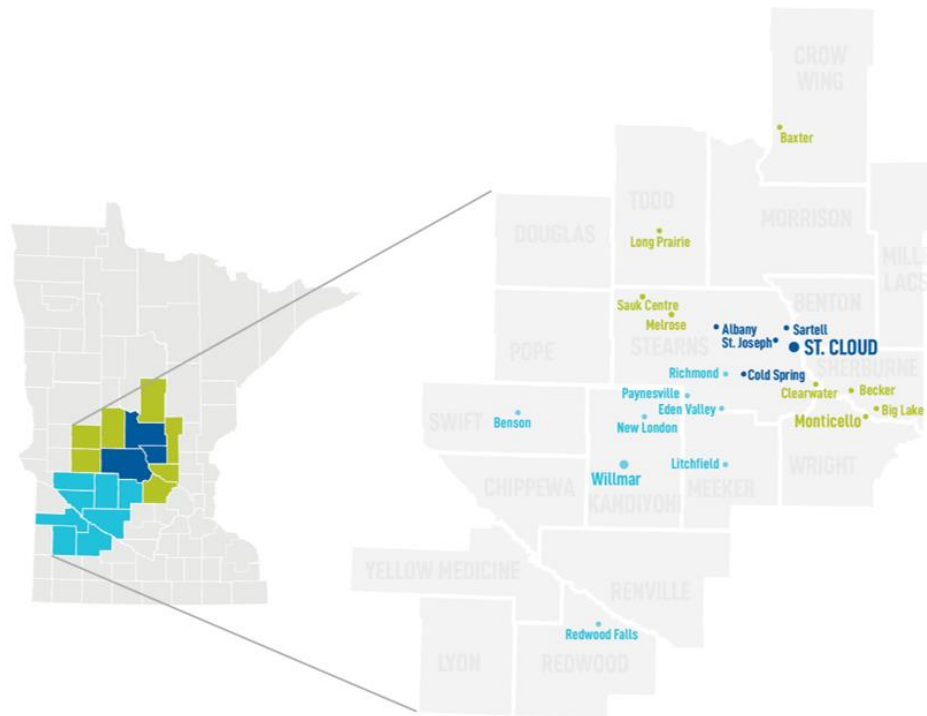
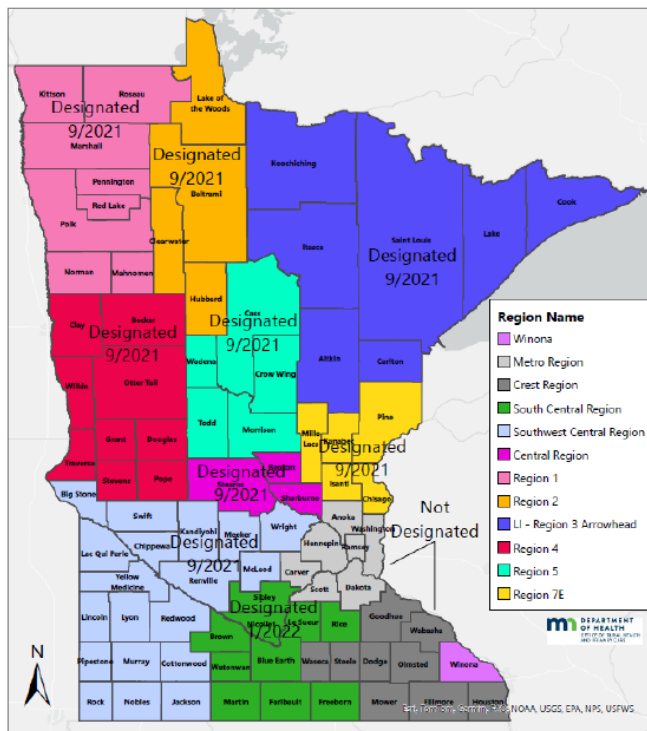


Minnesota Child & Adolescent Psychiatrists

% Change in Supply & Demand



Mental Health Geographic & Low Income HPSA Designations



Maldistribution of Mental Health Professionals

Population-to-Provider Ratios, 2024

(Green \leq Statewide Ratio; Red $\geq 1.5\times$ Statewide Ratio)

Region	Psychiatrists	Psych APRNs	Psychologists	LICSWs	LPCs/LPCCs	LMFTs	LADCs
Central	20,845	9,380	4,467	1,795	2,769	2,570	2,017
Northeast	11,279	4,141	2,388	854	2,256	6,290	1,467
Northwest	18,182	8,432	4,476	1,686	2,784	5,489	2,365
Southeast	4,783	7,343	2,459	1,116	2,556	5,858	2,436
Southwest	18,917	6,969	3,515	1,806	3,256	4,318	2,422
Twin Cities Metro	6,813	6,294	1,344	722	1,694	1,601	1,756
Statewide	8,286	6,682	1,837	966	2,033	2,194	1,899



Minnesota Psychiatric Society

Improving Minnesota's mental health care through education, advocacy, and sound psychiatric practice, and achieving health equity.

February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Backer and members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am the President-Elect of the Minnesota Psychiatric Society (MPS) and write to you today to express MPS support for HF 958 requiring Minnesota Medical Assistance reimbursement for the CoCM codes to fully implement the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) which expands access to effective mental health care in primary care settings.

MPS represents over 450 psychiatrists practicing in communities throughout the state in health systems, academic centers, correctional facilities, and often with underserved populations. The mission of MPS is to improve Minnesota's mental health care, including the treatment of substance use disorders, through education, advocacy, sound medical practice, and promoting health equity.

The CoCM model delivers effective mental health care in primary care with a care team led by the primary care provider (PCP) and including a behavioral health care manager and psychiatrist. It is an essential tool to improve access to mental health care in Minnesota and build equity for Minnesotans on PMAP and Medicaid by closing the current 2-tiered system with those on private insurance covered already.

Currently, Minnesotans with private insurance are guaranteed access to CoCM, but those who rely on Medicaid are not. This bill corrects that inequity, reduces wait times, creates efficiencies, and improves outcomes, all while saving money. Collaborative Care is the most effective model of care to treat mental health and substance use disorders, and research shows CoCM returns \$6.50 for every \$1 invested.

Please support HF 958 and lead the way to improve mental health access and deliver better outcomes sooner for more Minnesotans.

Thank you,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lonnie Widmer, MD".

Lonnie Widmer, MD
MPS President-Elect

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Trangle".

Michael Trangle, MD, DLFAPA
MPS Legislative Chair