

Dear Chair Fischer and the House Human Service Policy Committee,

I write to you today as a concerned member of the mental health community, representing the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH). Our mission has always been to provide vital mental health services to children and families in need. However, the current state of Medicaid mental health rates is significantly impacting our ability to deliver the care that is crucial for the well-being of our communities.

Impact on Service Delivery:

The existing Medicaid mental health rates have led to a host of issues that directly affect the quality and timeliness of care for children and families. These include:

- **Delays in Accessing Care:** The inadequacy of reimbursement rates has resulted in delays for individuals seeking mental health services, exacerbating their suffering and putting their well-being at risk.
- **Shrinkage of Key Services:** Critical mental health services are shrinking due to financial constraints, limiting our scope of care.
- **Inability to Staff Critical Care:** The rates have made it challenging to attract and retain skilled mental health professionals, jeopardizing the availability of critical care.

Systemic Crisis:

These issues are not isolated but are part of a growing systemic crisis within and outside the mental health system. Families struggle to access the care they need, leading to a ripple effect that impacts their overall well-being and the stability of our communities.

Urgently Needed Solution:

The solution to this crisis is clear: fixing the Medicaid mental health rates must be the highest priority for the 2024 session. We urge you to consider implementing Medicaid outpatient community-based mental health rates that reimburse for the actual cost of care. This adjustment will enable us to provide early intervention and prevention services, fostering children's and families' health, well-being, and hopeful futures.

It is imperative that we address the current Medicaid mental health rates crisis promptly. By ensuring proper reimbursement for the cost of care, we can profoundly impact the lives of countless children and families in our communities. We implore you to take decisive action during the 2024 session to rectify this situation. The well-being of our communities is at stake, and together, we can make a positive change.

Sincerely,



Brandon Jones

Executive Director, Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health