



February 7, 2023

Representative Mohamud Noor
Chair, Human Services Finance Committee
379 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF586 (Frederick) Minnesota State University, Mankato Community Behavioral Health Center Appropriation

Dear Chair Noor and committee members,

Created in 1994, the MRHA has grown to be a recognized advocate for rural health in Minnesota. Our mission is to improve the health of rural Minnesotans through education, advocacy, and by fostering cooperative partnerships. We work decisionmakers to share how decisions they make affect the quality of health care provided in rural Minnesota.

I am writing today in support of HF586 (Frederick): Minnesota State University, Mankato Community Behavioral Health Center funding to establish a mental health training clinic.

By every statistical measure, the mental wellbeing of Minnesotans has never been worse. This is coming at a time in which access to behavioral health services has never been more difficult. As this treatment gap between consumers and providers continues to grow, it's important to note that it is not geographically equitable. While residents of rural Minnesota have the same emotional challenges of the metro area, they have fewer providers who are trained to help.

The Center for Rural Behavioral Health training clinic would provide a workforce development opportunity that would help grow the number of behavioral health professionals who will serve the current, and next generation of rural Minnesotans. At the same time, this community facing training clinic would help meet an unmet need of providing mental healthcare services for the residents of southern Minnesota.

While H.F. 586 won't solve all the mental health challenges facing rural Minnesota, it will go a long way to ensure that those who call rural Minnesota home, will have access to mental healthcare when they need it.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to share our support of funding for the development of a training clinic through the Center for Rural Behavioral Health. If you have any questions regarding MRHA's position, feel free to contact me at mark@mnruralhealth.org or 218-201-0098.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Jones', written over a white background.

Mark Jones
Executive Director