



March 8, 2023  
House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee

Dear Chair Pinto and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing in support of HF 1198 which includes a number of provisions that would break down barriers and urgently expand access to needed mental health services for children and families.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric healthcare system, seeing more than 166,000 kids annually. We see children and teens from all 87 counties and 60 percent of the counties in our surrounding states. We serve a diverse patient population and 46% of our patients are enrolled in Medicaid.

Children in our state are in the midst of a mental health crisis. In 2021 suicidal ideation was one of our top five diagnoses at Children's Minnesota. We are continuing to expand our continuum of mental health care to include more acute mental health services to meet the community need, but more must be done to build a comprehensive children's mental health system that ensures that kids can receive the right level of care, when they need it.

Each provision of this bill is needed to support our kids' mental health. Children's Minnesota strongly supports the following:

- Funding the development of placement options for children boarding in hospitals, including improvements to the Mental Health Innovation Grant Program
- Expanding capacity and allowing specialization of Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities
- Providing Medical Assistance coverage for care coordination and enhancing transition support for youth to receive treatment or services in the most appropriate community setting
- Dedicating resources to capacity building and staff training for intensive in-home care
- Investing in culturally responsive school-linked mental health services and early childhood mental health services and consultation

At Children's Minnesota, our vision is to be every family's essential partner in raising healthier children. As the kid experts in our community, it is our goal to improve the health and wellbeing of kids in our state. More needs to be done to support the mental health of children in Minnesota and the work cannot wait. Please support HF 1198.

Sincerely,

Amanda Jansen, MPP  
Director of Public Policy  
Children's Minnesota