

Nick Stumo-Langer

From: Shiori Tomatsu <tomat008@umn.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 10:12 AM
To: Nick Stumo-Langer; Brion Curran; Dave Baker; Debra Kiel; Elliott Engen; Heather Edelson; Jeff Backer; Jessica Hanson; Kim Hicks; Leigh Finke; Luke Frederick; Mohamud Noor; Paul Novotny; Peter Fischer
Subject: Support for HF1436

Dear Representative Fischer and members of the Human Services Policy Committee,

I am writing this e-mail in enthusiastic support of HF 1436 and the programs and funding outlined in the bill which would invest in training and support for mental health professionals, particularly those caring for children, in the state of Minnesota. The provisions in this bill which would improve pediatric mental health training would be extremely beneficial to my training and the training of all pediatric primary care providers in the state of Minnesota.

As a pediatric resident in training, I see patients with mental health concerns everyday. Mental health concerns are on the rise. For example, I have seen countless children in the clinic who struggle with severe depression and anxiety. It is difficult to tell these families and patients that many of my colleagues and I do not feel comfortable managing these patients, and we end up referring to child psychiatry or child psychology for further medical management and therapy. Unfortunately, the waitlists for these referrals are several months. Consequently, children have to wait 3-6 months to get treatment that could have been initiated in the primary care setting.

In comparison, when a child with newly diagnosed asthma comes in, I do not let them struggle with their symptoms for 3-6 months while waiting for a pulmonologist to see them. I immediately determine the severity of their asthma, start them on an inhaler, and continue monitoring them until they are able to see the specialist.

However, when it comes to mental health management, we as providers feel out of water with helping, even though mental health problems are more common than asthma (for reference, 1 in 12 children ages 0-17 have asthma, compared to **1 in 5 children** ages 13-18 have, or will have **serious mental health illness**). I know that if I had improved training in mental health care, I would be able to get these patients the care they needed sooner and more effectively.

I hope you'll vote yes on HF1436. It's a tremendously important investment in the health and wellbeing of young people in the state of Minnesota.

Shiori Tomatsu, MD
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