



February 20, 2022

Dear Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, I am writing to express our support for HF3470, authored by Rep. Her. This bill will allow Children's Hospital to add 22 hospital beds specifically for the treatment of children with mental illnesses.

Children in Minnesota who are experiencing a mental health crisis are facing incredible barriers to accessing the level of care that they need. Our helpline receives calls nearly every week with families trying to find a hospital bed or residential treatment or concerned about the long wait times in emergency rooms. While we need to be careful when adding to the most intensive and costly part of our mental health system, it is clear that more beds are needed immediately.

We are pleased that Children's Minnesota is finally stepping up to serve the whole child. I have visited the site and learned more about the services and treatment they plan to provide and believe it is a good proposal. NAMI Minnesota has long held that any new psychiatric hospital beds should:

- Be located in a regular hospital in order to meet the total needs of the individual
- Have an emergency room so as not to be able to select only those patients with lower or less complex needs

Children's proposal meets both of those criteria.

We urge your support for HF 3470. Our children are struggling, and families are desperately seeking a hospital bed. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director



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