

February 22, 2021

Dear Distinguished Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

I am writing to you to express support for **HF1268, legislation that will sustain and grow our mental health work force.** Leadership by the **African American Babies Coalition and Projects** is especially important for these efforts.

**I am particularly concerned that we address the profound and intersecting disparities in mental health, health, education and wellbeing in Minnesota. We must address racism and promote equity for all babies and parents, notably for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.**

The African American Babies Coalition and Projects has successfully led **ICHRP**, the Integrated Care for High Risk Pregnancies Initiative. As a pediatrician and an early childhood advocate I continue to admire this inspired community led collaborative process.

**Especially during this time of COVID-19 we need to have a mental health work force that is trauma informed, culturally responsive, and resilience focused.** 80% of brain development happens during the first three years of life, with biological impact also significant during pregnancy. If, in communities and systems, we are able to provide care, reduce toxic stresses, and buffer them, more young children will be on the way to developmental, educational, and life time success.

I appreciate your taking the time to consider this important piece of legislation and ask that you support **HF 1268** in order to help give more of Minnesota's children and families the healthy beginning they deserve.

Thank you,

Tom Scott, MD  
Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrician  
4200 Ewing Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55410