



## Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, Inc.

*MACMHP improves access to and quality  
of behavioral healthcare in Minnesota.*

March 16, 2016

Representative Matt Dean  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
401 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Dean:

We write to you today as a broad coalition supporting the state's efforts to improve and transform the delivery of mental and chemical health care services in Minnesota through the Excellence in Mental Health Act.

Navigating the mental health and substance use disorder systems as they exist today in Minnesota can be extremely difficult. Typically, a person with a mental illness will need to contact several different agencies to obtain a different level of care, and rarely can someone obtain both mental health and substance use disorder treatment through the same agency. The Excellence Act will improve the way Minnesotans access mental health and addiction treatment by creating a "one-stop-shop" model of certified community clinics that provide comprehensive, coordinated and integrated care to children and adults with complex mental and chemical health conditions under a new payment model – a daily cost-based rate for all services.

When a Minnesotan walks through any one of these clinics' doors, he or she will receive coordinated care for mental, chemical and physical health needs – and Minnesota will have uniform, measurable ways to demonstrate the value of these services and calculate their costs. By providing this high level of care coordination and incentivizing partnerships among providers, social services agencies, counties and other key stakeholders, the Excellence Act will greatly increase the likelihood that care will be received before a person enters into crisis, lessening the burden on families, emergency rooms and law enforcement.

This is truly a transformative moment for Minnesota. In 2014, Congress enacted the Excellence in Mental Health Act, which established an eight-state demonstration project to test "Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics" (CCBHCs). The 2015 Legislature promptly provided funding to support the state's efforts to participate in the demonstration project. In October 2015, Minnesota was selected as one of 24 states to receive a federal planning grant. Of the states awarded planning grants, up to eight will be selected as demonstration sites.



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Minnesota must act now in order to ensure that we have the strongest federal application possible to be selected as one of the final demonstration states. Legislation setting forth the requirements for the state's continued action on the creation of CCBHCs is moving forward with strong bipartisan support and must be passed this session in order for the state to be considered as a viable demonstration site.

This critical investment in the state's mental and chemical health system simply cannot wait. We ask that you consider passage of HF 2690 so that Minnesota will be able to leverage a small state expenditure into federal funding that has the potential to fundamentally transform the landscape of health care and will improve the lives of those living with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.

On behalf of all the below signed individuals and organizations, we thank you for all your past support of Minnesota's mental health system and the individuals and families it serves. We look forward to working in partnership with you to ensure that Minnesota remains one of the nation's leaders in the movement toward an integrated health system that benefits all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

*Claire Wilson*

Claire Wilson

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## **Additional Signers/Organizations Supporting the Excellence in Mental Health Act**

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation  
Carey Zahrbock, Medica Behavioral Health  
Clair Prody, Lakeland Mental Health Center  
Darrin Helt, Blue Cross Blue Shield MN  
Dave Cook, Zumbro Valley Health Center  
Genoa, a QoI Healthcare Company  
Glenn Anderson, Northern Pines Mental Health Center  
Jim Getchell, Human Development Center  
Lucas Kunach, Fraser  
Matt Eastwood, Canvas Health  
Mark Casagrande, Park Avenue Center  
Mental Health Legislative Network  
Mental Health Minnesota  
Minnesota Ambulance Association  
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs  
Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators  
Minnesota Association of Resources for Recovery and Chemical Health  
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies  
Minnesota Hospital Association  
The Minnesota Military Mental Health Initiative Committee  
Minnesota Recovery Connection  
Minnesota Safety Net Coalition  
NAMI-Minnesota  
Nancy Houlton, Houlton Consulting  
Roger Meyer, Meyer Consulting  
Shauna Reitmeier, Northwestern Mental Health Center