

**PEOPLE
INCORPORATED**
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Representative Mohamad Noor, Chair
Human Services Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
February 9, 2023

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of People Incorporated Mental Health Services, I am sending this letter to support Representative Bierman's House File 564 – increase funding to the school-linked mental health program.

People Incorporated is a Community Based Mental Health provider serving Minnesota through a full continuum of mental health services for adults and children. People Incorporated serves more than 12,000 discrete clients annually, with more than a third receiving more than one service line in the agency. We are a proud demonstration site for the CCBHC and a proud partner in building mental wellness in Minnesota.

People Incorporated is proud to co-locate mental health professionals/ therapists in more than 30 Minnesota schools. We provide direct therapy services to children. We also function as part of the school team -

- following up with school staff,
- teaching staff skills for identifying a student's symptoms and de-escalation techniques
- coordinating services with school leadership
- follow up/ transition of services for students to access more intensive services in our clinic

The school-linked mental health grant allows us to work with school staff, coordinate care, deliver services to students without insurance or with very high out of pocket expenses. This grant allows us to serve children and families beyond the walls of our clinic sites. This flexibility helps our clients greatly. By its nature, School-Linked Mental Health was designed to remove barriers students had to accessing mental health support. The service specifically focuses on serving children and families who are otherwise not able to access mental health. Not surprisingly, with the onset of the pandemic, barriers only became more significant for children and families who were School-Linked Mental Health clients.

We increasingly see the mental health needs of children and families are spiking as they are dealing with the trauma of the pandemic and the countless unanswered questions about how to maintain economic stability, personal safety, and a sense of future. As needs are spiking in community life, capacity to meet those needs is increasingly imperiled. Prior to and exacerbated by COVID, the greatest challenges for providers are recruitment and retention of mental health counselors. Providers are seeking all lifelines for a more durable solution that will allow them to prepare to deliver critical mental health support. The school-linked mental health program is a key component of our community mental health care system. Please support increasing funding to the program and House File 564.

Thank you for your consideration and support of the mental health needs of our children and families.

Sincerely,



Jill Wiedemann-West

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CEO