



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
of St. Paul and Minneapolis

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March 7, 2022

Representative Jennifer Schultz
Chair, House Human Services Finance & Policy Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Support for HF3215 & Children's Day Treatment

Chair Schultz and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, I write in support of HF3215, a bill providing emergency relief for community mental health programs, and to call attention to the important role of children's day treatment in supporting the health and wellness of Minnesota youth.

Catholic Charities is a regional leader of housing, emergency shelter and direct services, serving over 23,000 men, women, children and families annually. This includes our Children's Day Treatment program, which operates in partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools to provide voluntary, year-round therapeutic services to students in grades K-8 who have mental health needs or behavioral challenges that hinder academic progress.

Through a trauma-informed lens, children in day treatment receive skills development, individual and group therapy, and family education and support to help them build healthy relationships and learn new ways of coping and managing difficult feelings and situations. This full-day program combines treatment and academics in a co-located school setting, allowing children to receive care without having to leave their community and helping to reduce demands on more expensive hospital and emergency department visits.

Day treatment programs provided a valuable service to children and families before COVID-19, and the need for such programming has only grown as we've witnessed the mental health impact of the pandemic on children and their families. Unfortunately, the pandemic has also taken its toll on day treatment providers, who have struggled to maintain services and supports amid quarantines and COVID-19 protocols, staffing challenges, and financial losses tied to the inability to bill for these fee-based services.

The emergency relief afforded in HF3215 would provide important resources to help stabilize community mental health programs, including day treatment, and their workforce. This investment is needed now to prevent the further deterioration of this vital component of Minnesota's mental health system.

We ask for your support of HF3215 and children's day treatment programs, to help ensure more children receive the support and skills they need to thrive in school and their communities.

Sincerely,

Keith Kozerski
Senior Division Director, Children & Family Services

Catholic Charities serves those most in need. We are a leader at solving poverty, creating opportunity, and advocating for justice in the community.