



Representative Peter Fischer, Chair
Behavioral Health Policy Division
Minnesota House of Representatives
March 23, 2022

Dear Chair Fischer and Members of the Committee

Erik Sievers, Executive Director
Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center

Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center has been a Community Mental Health Center in southeastern MN since 1965. Today we provide a broad range of behavioral health services and supports for all ages. Services include:

- Mental Health Case Management
- Clinic and School Based Mental Health Therapy
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Residential Services for Adults
- Medication Management for all ages
- Adult and Children's psychiatric rehabilitating services

MN Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) started as a new model of delivering integrated behavioral health care to Minnesotans. Originally a federal demonstration, your agency is thrilled CCBHC is now a Medical Assistance (MA) benefit in Minnesota.

Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center would like to thank you and the rest of the legislature for supporting the CCBHC model. Our agency became a CCBHC as the model is intentionally designed to improve access, better integrate care, and support our ability to train and use evidence-based practice models of care. The payment structure has helped us early on in aligning staff in pay equity and has shifted our agency to be clearly mission-driven as CCBHC is a very consumer/client-centered model of care.

CCBHC as a model was designed with the vision to be a one-stop shop for all eligible clients to receive integrated community mental and chemical health services, with care coordination and streamlined supports from our mental health system. This is opposed to clients and providers having to navigate our fragmented systems for care. Currently, there is no single statutory or regulatory authority today that recognizes all the CCBHC services and requirements under one integrated clinic entity. These current standards have conflicting requirements. This translates to increased costs and time for providers that are already strapped under the ongoing pandemic and workforce crisis.

The certification was very time-intensive and certain aspects of it, including but not limited to the needs assessment, were duplicative of efforts in our region that already complete such an assessment. Proposals



in this bill will better enable our agency and others throughout the state to pursue becoming a CCBHC verses shying away from it due to the heavy administrative burdens in place currently.

This bill seeks to takes steps in streamlining the model's requirements as CCBHC grows and evolves in Minnesota. I am asking you to please support the passage of HF 4378 to help us continue to increase access and sustain our mental health care in Minnesota.

Thank you!

Erik Sievers, MBA, MSW
Executive Director