



The Kid Experts™

February 9, 2023
House Human Services Finance Committee

Dear Chair Noor and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing in support of HF 564 which increases funding for school-linked mental health services.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric healthcare system, seeing more than 166,000 kids annually. We see children and teens from all 87 counties and 60 percent of the counties in our surrounding states. We serve a diverse patient population and 46% of our patients are enrolled in Medicaid.

Children in our state are in the midst of a mental health crisis. In 2021 suicidal ideation was one of our top five diagnoses at Children's Minnesota. As a result, we are continuing to expand our continuum of mental health care to include more acute mental health services, but we can't do this work alone. Minnesota schools are on the front lines of this work. Funding for school-linked mental health programs is critical as these programs connect students who may be facing mental health challenges with an onsite community mental health provider who can give them the support they need early on – often avoiding the need for more acute or crisis care. School-linked mental health programs also make mental health services more accessible as grant funds are used to pay for care for children who are uninsured or underinsured and for activities that are not reimbursable under insurance.

At Children's Minnesota, our vision is to be every family's essential partner in raising healthier children. As the kid experts in our community, it is our goal to improve the health and wellbeing of kids in our state. Schools are an invaluable partner in this work which is why we strongly support HF564.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Jansen".

Amanda Jansen, MPP
Director of Public Policy
Children's Minnesota