



Minnesota Coalition
FOR FAMILY HOME VISITING

February 17, 2023

Representative Peter Fischer
Chair, Services Policy Committee
200 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Fischer and Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting (MCFHV) urges you to support HF 1198 to improve access to, and invest in, mental health services for families in Minnesota. When addressed and treated early, mental health interventions are shown to prevent the need for additional medication, saving costs and mitigating the lifelong impact of mental health challenges on a baby's cognitive, physical and emotional development.

The Author's Amendment, H 1198 A, allows families to begin receiving preliminary early childhood mental health care following a brief assessment during their baby's consultation appointment. When families with babies and young children are referred into the mental health system, they've reported waiting three to nine months before accessing a consultation appointment. In the time it takes to access a consultation, complete the extensive DC: 0-5 mental health assessment and begin care, babies have grown in and out of multiple developmental cycles. A brief assessment process will allow families to access services to address their children's mental health in a matter of weeks, not months, and provide the family critical services and supports. Increased resources for early childhood mental health services will address parent and caregivers concerns of being forced to choose between their family's financial wellbeing and treating their mental health as steep copays and long distance make it challenging for families to access care.

Finally, the Coalition supports allowing families receiving MFIP with access to child care grants. We support providing parents with the time and security to receive mental health care because it uplifts those most impacted by systematic barriers, families in rural Minnesota and low-income families.

Please join the Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting in supporting HF 1189 as amended, to improve access to preventative and early intervention mental health services for both caregivers and their young children.

Thank you,

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,
Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting
Projects Coordinator

Cati Gómez
Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting
Policy Associate