To: Minnesota Representative Tina Liebling, Health Finance Policy Chair

 Minnesota Representative Robert Bierman, Health Finance Policy Vice Chair

 House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 2930 Article 2, Section 68 ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Dear Representative Liebling, Representative Bierman, and the House Health Finance and Policy Committee, we and our colleagues are writing to you to advocate for investment in our communities’ capacity to train and equip young people as ambassadors of healing. It is certainly known to you that there are significant gaps in healthcare outcomes closely correlated to differences in race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Our Somali Muslim communities see striking differences in our current healthcare system’s capacity to ensure wellbeing at the standards achieved by our white, Christian citizens. This gap means lost lives, suffering, long-term health risks, and the factors that produce this disparity and long-term health risks.

While our institutions must improve and change, we as citizens must also be active in producing change. We ask that you please provide significant funding for adolescent health promotion that directly funds trusted community-based organizations to play a larger role in educating community, providing direct and culturally responsive support to our community, and help us to ensure this is a generationally sustained change by organizing youth health ambassadors. Our hope is we will be able to see members of our communities’ youth health ambassadors working with our adult health ambassadors to create a change that our healthcare systems cannot, without us, bring about.

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Imam Sharif Mohamed Mr. Wali Dirie

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CC: Josh Sande, Committee Administrator