



March 25, 2022

Dear Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee:

NAMI Minnesota is writing to strongly support HF3613 which would increase funds for the shelter-linked mental health program. The legislature created this program in 2019.

This program builds on the experience with the school-linked program and funds community mental health providers to co-locate and provide mental health services to youth experiencing homelessness at a shelter. Grant dollars can be used to develop programming to prepare youth for mental health services, provide on-site mental health services or mental health case management, increase the capacity of housing provider staff to work with youth with mental illness, purchase equipment for telemedicine, and to fill in gaps of the grant will be included in the biennial homeless youth report.

Shelter-Linked Mental Health grants were awarded to five youth serving agencies. Three of the agencies are located in the metro, while two are located in greater Minnesota who helped 116 youth. Results of the program, as reported in the Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report-April 2021, were as follows:

- Flourishing partnerships between homeless youth and Safe Harbor providers with community based mental health providers.
- Homeless youth and Safe Harbor program staff have been trained and supported by mental health providers and have increased their capacity to address mental health needs with youth in their programs
- Uninsured and under-insured youth have accessed individualized mental health services, gained access to insurance, and have also continued receiving mental health services even after exiting homeless youth and Safe Harbor programming.
- Despite the challenges of virtual services, stay-at-home orders and social distancing, providers have been conducting groups and engaging with youth.
- More mental health services are being provided to youth in culturally specific programming and in a culturally responsive manner due to the partnerships between mental health providers and culturally specific youth programming.

We urge you to support this important program that will help youth access mental health services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH

Executive Director



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