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STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH  
*and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health*

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May 7, 2021

Dear Health and Human Services Conference Committee Member,

The MN Governor's Mental Health Advisory Council & Children's Subcommittee would like to thank you for your hard work towards passing a health and human services budget. We are writing this to highlight a few key priorities that will greatly benefit people with mental illnesses and substance use disorders throughout MN in a cost-effective manner. As you move forward, we urge you to include the following items in your final compromise:

- **Mental Health Workforce:** We support investments in the House bill to expand MN's mental health workforce while making it more culturally diverse (including loan forgiveness, alternative licensing pathways for BIPOC, allowing clinical trainees to bill private insurance, including diverse individuals in professional Boards).
- **School-Linked Mental Health:** We support the funding increase for school-linked mental health services in the Senate bill. The stress from the pandemic and distance learning has increased student mental health needs and this will help.
- **Children's Residential Treatment:** We appreciate that both bills create an alternative pathway for MN children to access appropriate residential treatment without going through the child protection system.
- **Housing:** People with mental illnesses are much more likely to experience housing instability or homelessness. We support the Housing Supports increase in the Senate and the much needed investment in our emergency shelters in the House bill.
- **Telehealth:** Both the House and Senate bills take important steps forward to expand access to telehealth services, without undermining providers with lower telehealth rates or separate telehealth networks. We also support the language in the Senate bill that creates a task force on a public private telepresence strategy.
- **Federal Funding:** Channel federal funding from the American Rescue Plan to support tele-health (especially including telephone only), fund pilot projects to offer voluntary engagement in services, and increase funding for 1st Episode Psychosis programs.
- **PsyPact:** Whether this legislation moves forward as a standalone bill or is folded into the HHS omnibus bill, we urge you to pass the PsyPact bill using language contained in the Senate's version.

Thank you for considering the priorities of the State Advisory Council on Mental Health and the Children's Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

Michelle Schmid-Egleston, MA, LP

Co-Chair, Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health

Dave Lee, MA, LP, LMFT, LICSW

Chair, State Advisory Council on Mental Health



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Jeffrey Lind

Co-Chair, Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health

Michael Trangle, MD

Vice-Chair, State Advisory Council on Mental Health

Cc:

Patrick McQuillan for Minnesota House of Representatives Health and Human Services Finance Division

Bailey Strand for Minnesota State Senate Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee