March 1st, 2023

Dear House Commerce Committee Members

My name is Anne Emerson, I am a person in recovery, who struggled with a substance use disorder, and someone who lost a loved one to a fentanyl overdose. I thank you for the opportunity to lend my voice in today’s hearing on the Medicaid & Collaborative Care for Substance Use Disorder.

I strongly support the implementation of the Collaborative Care Model (CoMC), and urge your committee to pass the bill HF771. I believe this bill could have lifesaving impacts on individuals and families who experience substance use disorder.

I struggled with meth use for many years, it affected every aspect of my life, including my physical and mental health. Trying to find the right help felt like an even bigger struggle. You get sent from your primary physician to a mental health physician, where the wait time to see a mental health physician was months away. As a person who was an emotional user, I didn’t have months to wait to get help with my mental health, I needed it at the same time I was receiving help for my substance use. Once I was able to get the mental health help I needed, it lasted for a few months until my insurance denied payment and denied all appeals to go there, and told me I had to go in network, despite the progress I was making. It left me in a very vulnerable, helpless spot.

The stigma of substance use, and mental health come not only from society but also from being denied the proper care and treatment. I strongly urge you to please pass bill HF771, it will save lives, and save families from the devastation of losing a loved one.

Thank you again for the opportunity to lend my voice.

Sincerely,

Anne Emerson

Coon Rapids, MN