



March 16, 2023
House Human Services Finance Committee

Dear Chair Noor and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota, I am writing in support of HF 1436 which includes a number of provisions that would provide needed investments in the mental health workforce.

Children's Minnesota is the state's largest pediatric healthcare system, seeing more than 166,000 kids annually and training 70-80% of the state's future pediatric workforce. We serve a diverse patient population and 46% of our patients are enrolled in Medicaid.

Children in our state are in the midst of a mental health crisis. In 2021 suicidal ideation was one of our top five diagnoses. We are continuing to expand our continuum of mental health care to include more acute mental health services to meet the community need, but more must be done to build a comprehensive children's mental health system that ensures that kids can receive the right level of care, when they need it. This includes investing in the mental health workforce.

Children's Minnesota strongly supports the following components of this bill:

- Investing in growing the number of professionals, practitioners and peers working in the field with a focus on diversity and having a workforce that is more culturally informed and responsive.
- Increasing funding for mental health professional loan forgiveness programs.
- Creating a special program to train pediatricians in mental health.
- Increasing funding for the mental health provider supervision grant program.
- Establishing a mental health professional scholarship grant program.
- Creating and funding a Youth Care Professional training program for people working in direct care with youth in residential settings.

At Children's Minnesota, our vision is to be every family's essential partner in raising healthier children. As the kid experts in our community, it is our goal to improve the health and wellbeing of kids in our state. More needs to be done to support the mental health of children in Minnesota and the work cannot wait. Please support HF 1436.

Sincerely,

Amanda Jansen, MPP
Director of Public Policy
Children's Minnesota