

March 28, 2023



Rep. Zach Stephenson
449 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chairman Stephenson,

As physician leaders at Hennepin Healthcare, Minnesota's safety net hospital, we want to thank you for including a number of legislative proposals that will improve patient access to behavioral health services and allow for coordinated care which will improve patient outcomes.

Hennepin Healthcare is an integrated system of care that includes HCMC as well as a clinic system with primary care clinics located in Minneapolis and across Hennepin County. Our patient population is unique amongst other health systems as nearly half of our patients are insured through Medicaid and nearly 20% of our Medicaid population is homeless or has housing insecurity. Behavioral health needs are more than twice as prevalent among Medicaid enrollees as it is in the general population.

First, we want to thank you for including the **Psychiatric Collaborative Care Model (CoCM)** which will help us better coordinate care between primary care and our psychiatric department. In the CoCM, primary care providers (PCPs) treating patients behavioral health problems are supported by a behavioral health care manager and a psychiatric consultant. This is the exact model we need to help manage our patients' needs before they have an acute mental health crisis.

We also want to thank you for your support to include bills looking at issues related to parity for behavioral health. Establishing a **Mental Health Parity and Substance Abuse Accountability Office** within the Department of Commerce to oversee health plans and review consumer and provider complaints will help with transparency and ensure more compliance with current state and federal parity laws.

Including these bills will help access to mental health and substance use disorder care for Minnesotans. We thank you for prioritizing patients. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Sr. Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, Susie Emmert, at susie.emmert@hcmcd.org.

Sincerely,

Eduardo Colon-Navarro, MD
Chief of Psychiatry

Gavin Bart, MD
Division Director, Addiction Medicine

Diana Becker Cutts, MD
Chair of Pediatrics

Tyler Winkelman, MD
Division Director, General Internal Medicine

Allyson Brotherson, MD
Chair of Family Medicine
Senior Medical Director Primary Care Ring