



Senator Jim Abeler, Chair
Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota State Senate
March 21, 2022

Chair Abeler and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Alluma Inc. I am writing to convey our strong support for and urge the Committee to pass Senator Nelson's Senate File 3690 – policy changes and updates to Children's Therapeutic Supports Services (CTSS).

Minnesota Community Mental Health Perspective

Alluma is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic delivering services to children and families in 8 counties of NW MN which include Kittson, Mahnomon, Marshall, Norman, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau counties. In 2021 Alluma served 1,364 Individuals under the age of 18 with over half of them receiving CTSS services.

The proposal in SF 3690 incorporates collective work from a joint effort across community providers, schools, the Departments of Education and Human Services and the Governor's Children's Cabinet to increase access to children's mental health care. The workgroups formed under this effort developed recommendations across the multiple areas of children's mental health care access, including opportunities to streamline program environments, provider roles and reporting requirements. While the work under these workgroups continue, SF 3690 language is aligned with their discussions and recommendations.

In calendar years 2021 and 2022, our state's community behavioral health programs are struggling to maintain services under the ongoing pandemic and the extreme workforce crisis. The full impact of these forces is resulting in our mental health agencies not being able to keep programs open or keep up with our clients' growing needs for care. A critical sustainable challenge is in the ongoing regulatory and reporting requirements of our public behavioral health programs, including children's therapeutic supports services (CTSS).

The regulatory overreach imposed by the CTSS criteria is taking qualified providers off line to review records, sign off on documents, develop extensive policies and procedures when they could be seeing clients. In many of our counties, we have wait lists of upwards of 6 weeks to schedule an evaluation for a child to receive care. That is over a month when a family is in distress and wanting support and help. Additionally, providers are leaving community-based programs for private practice so as not to have to navigate the complex regulations. Alluma currently has 7 open positions to serve our youth and family.

We are faced with more needs, the same immense administrative burdens, and less people to do it all. Alluma asks for the Committee's support in increasing access to CTSS services by passing SF 3690, which takes many steps toward removing significant regulatory barriers that are demanding and taking much of providers time away from client care.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

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