

March 21, 2022



Senator Jim Abeler, Committee Chair
Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate

Dear Senator Abeler:

My name is Julie Sjodal, I am the Chief Executive Officer of St. David's Center which is a nonprofit organization with a mission to build relationships that nurture the development of every child and family. We do this important work through providing a range of critically needed services to over 4000 children and families across the Twin Cities metro community. A major focus of our organization's work is providing mental health services for children and families that have faced significant challenges throughout their young lives, exacerbated by the pandemic.

We have a range of mental health services which include in-home, school-based, case management, outpatient services and intensive day treatment. Many of our clients are underinsured and / or utilize Medical Assistance (MA) benefits. We are deeply committed to this work to not only address the suffering that so many children in our community are facing, but also to provide interventions that can change the developmental trajectories for children over their lifetime.

I am writing today to ask you and the House Human Services Committee to support HF3738 bill that includes provisions to decrease administrative burdens and create greater flexibilities to provide CTSS to children and families by streamlining policy language, updating policy roles and simplifying reporting requirement.

This bill will provide administrative simplification that is absolutely necessary during this time of unprecedented mental health need. As a community based mental health organization serving some of our community's most vulnerable children and families, we have not only seen our waitlists across programs increasing to hundreds during the pandemic, but also must name that our experience providing these services this past year tells us the prevalence, acuity, and complexity of needs has never been higher – and not just for children, but for the whole family. It is critically important to the children and families we serve that we focus our attention on treatment rather than the overly burdensome compliance issues in statute.

We urge you to support this bill so that mental health programs provided by St. David's Center and so many other organizations across Minnesota can continue to focus our efforts on continuing to provide our critically needs services to children and families across our state.

With gratitude for your leadership and service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Sjodal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Sjodal
Chief Executive Officer