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March 21, 2022

Chair Schultz
House Human Services Committee

Chair Abeler
Senate Human Services Reform Committee

Dear Chairpersons Schultz and Abeler,

I respectfully request your support of HF 3738 and SF3690 as we are facing a significant mental health crisis in MN presently and need your help. As a long-term mental health service provider working for 43 years to date in Minnesota, we are seeing a convergence of challenges that include: high demand for mental health services for persons of all ages but especially children and teens and their families, workforce shortage of licensed therapists, mental health clinical trainees and practitioners, that is unprecedented in my career experience, high administrative demands for service oversight and delivery, and low rates making retention difficult—we are losing great staff to other employment offers that we can't compete with.

YOU have great opportunity to make a difference! YOU can support us in our service delivery capacity but passing HF3738 and SF3690. Please help with your supportive actions.

More specifically please note it would be very helpful for changes to occur:

- To be supported in law to focus on treatment provision vs compliance activities. Of course we share with you the quest for services provided with integrity and accountability is important but can be accomplished without unnecessary requirements.
- This work to be more appealing to professionals and that means less bureaucratic demands and more administrative simplification so that staff reap the rewards of being professional helpers vs paper pushers.
- Add care consultation and care coordination as billable benefits. These are incredibly important activities, but payment is needed to support staff in doing these activities.
- Certification to be conducted every 3 years which will be a win win for the STATE and providers. Additionally move CTSS to a licensed service under the Uniform Service Standards in Chapter 245.
- Remove overly prescriptive language regarding the provision of Day Treatment staff directions and hours required.

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- Include language that documentation should be per provider/per modality and NOT per hour. (The system does not gain and people are not served well by paper pushers).

I respectfully request your support in making these positive changes so that providers can put our mental health professional expertise and energies into truly be helpful to the people we are fortunate to work with.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Smetana McHugh, MSW, LICSW
Executive Director