

February 6, 2023

To members of the Honorable 93rd State of Minnesota Legislature,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Greater Mankato Area United Way to support Minnesota H.F. 586, which would appropriate funding to the Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University, Mankato to establish a mental health training clinic.

By every statistical measure, the mental wellbeing of Minnesotans has never been worse. This is coming at a time in which access to behavioral health services has never been more difficult. As this treatment gap between consumers and providers continues to grow, it is important to note that it is not geographically equitable. While residents of greater Minnesota have the same emotional challenges of the metro area, they have fewer providers who are trained to help.

This past year, Greater Mankato Area United Way convened a group of stakeholders to examine the issues around youth mental health and substance use. While many contributing factors were discussed as issues, access to behavioral healthcare for our youth was identified as the single greatest barrier to developing an emotionally healthy and resilient community for our young people.

The Center for Rural Behavioral Health training clinic would provide a workforce development opportunity that would help grow the number of behavioral health professionals who will serve the current, and next generation of Minnesotans. At the same time, this community facing training clinic would help meet an unmet need of providing mental healthcare services for the residents of southern Minnesota.

While H.F. 586 will not solve all the mental health challenges facing our state, it will go a long way to ensure that those who call greater Minnesota home, will have access to mental healthcare when they need it.

Thank you,



Elizabeth Harstad
Director of Community Impact