



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Twin Cities

Catholic Charities at Elliot Park
1007 East 14th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55404
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March 21, 2023

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Chair, Senate Health & Human Services Committee

Re: Support for SF926 (Mental Health Service Rates)

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Catholic Charities Twin Cities, I write to offer our support for SF926, a bill to establish a 35% rate bridge for Medicaid community-based mental health rates, which is necessary to strengthen children's day treatment programs that support the health and wellness of Minnesota youth.

Catholic Charities is a regional leader of housing, emergency shelter and direct services, serving more than 20,000 youth and adults annually. These services include our children's day treatment program, which operates in partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools to provide voluntary, year-round therapeutic services to students in grades K-8 who have mental health needs or behavioral challenges that hinder academic progress.

Through a trauma-informed lens, children in day treatment receive skills development, individual and group therapy, and family education and support to help them build healthy relationships and learn new ways of coping and managing difficult feelings and situations. This full-day program combines treatment and academics in a co-located school setting, allowing children to receive care without having to leave their community and helping to reduce demands on more expensive hospital and emergency room visits.

Day treatment programs provided a valuable service to children and families before COVID-19, and the need for such programming has only grown as we've witnessed the mental health impact of the pandemic. Unfortunately, Medicaid mental health rates for community-based care such as this have been stagnant for years, straining the ability of providers to maintain these vital services and supports.

SF926 would establish a rate bridge for Medicaid community-based mental health rates, in anticipation of the establishment of a future rate structure that is currently under design by DHS. This investment would help preserve the services that exist now and help build the foundation for strengthening Minnesota's mental health system into the future.

Please support SF926 and children's day treatment programs. With your help, we can ensure more children receive the support and skills they need to thrive in school and their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremiah Hawkins".

Jeremiah Hawkins
Senior Division Director, Children & Family Services