

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair  
Health & Human Services Committee  
Minnesota State Senate  
March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members

On behalf of Ramsey County, Social Services, I am sending this letter to support Senator Boldon's Senate File 926 – 35% bridge increase to outpatient mental health and substance use disorder Medical Assistance rates.

Ramsey County has a rich history as an organization working to support and enhance access to mental health and substance abuse services for all its residents. Our various community programs, resources, and services put residents first and on path towards wellness and stability. Ramsey County offers a wide range of mental health and substance abuse services including 24/7 mobile crisis services, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Adult Mental Health Targeted Case Management, Medication Management, Detoxification and Withdrawal Management and several other programs aimed at reaching vulnerable populations of youth and adults. These services aim to reduce the need for deep end supports such as hospitalization visits when they are not needed.

We are in a more severe crisis as it relates to mental health and SUD care coming out of the global pandemic than before. At the root of this crisis is the lack of sustainable reimbursement funding for our mental health and SUD care safety net. Costs of delivering care and sustaining staff salaries, benefits, facilities infrastructure, and meeting state regulations have increased exponentially. But Medical Assistance (Medicaid) reimbursements – the core source of funding for our MN mental health and SUD treatment system – have not been increased for a decade and do not include a way to keep up with inflation.

Community mental health providers and programs are striving to keep up with the need for mental health and SUD care, while being reflective and highly responsive to the individuals, families, and communities we serve across the state. This work comes with many rewards and challenges – financial, sustainability and human impacts, including:

- Waiting lists for intake and treatment more nearly two months long
- Unfilled staff positions
- Competitive market salaries increasing by up to 30%
- Compounded regulatory forms and reporting
- Required facilities upgrades

Please support increasing our MA rates for mental health and SUD care – this is foundational to solving our mental health and SUD crisis in Minnesota. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



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