



Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota State Senate
March 22, 2023

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP), 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.

The Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP) is the state's leading association for Community Mental Health Programs, representing 35 community-based mental health providers and agencies across the state. Our mission is to serve all who come to us seeking mental and chemical health services, regardless of their insurance status, ability to pay or where they live. As Essential Community Providers, we serve primarily culturally diverse, low-income, uninsured and public healthcare program insured Minnesotans, who cannot access services elsewhere. We serve our clients with comprehensive and coordinated care.

We are in a more severe mental health and SUD care access crisis 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

Jin Lee Palen, Executive Director
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs | MACMHP