



March 20, 2023

I am writing to express support for bill HF 2930 Article 2, Section 68 ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION because young people need opportunities to develop skills to thrive and experience positive mental health, including opportunities to engage with supportive adults and peers and skills to manage daily stress and make responsible decisions.

Since 2009, Minnesota's adolescent population has reported increased rates of mental health concerns, including increased rates of stress, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and suicide. Reports of psychological distress doubled during the pandemic and inequities intensified among Minnesota's Black, Indigenous, and populations of color, LGBTQ+, and rural populations.

Our young people need access not only to more mental culturally relevant health resources but resources for building out resources in their own communities. This work is core to the mission of MENTOR Minnesota. MENTOR Minnesota fuels the quality and quantity of equitable and inclusive developmental relationships for Minnesota's young people by building and elevating the capacity of programs, systems and policies.

According to our 2022 State of Mentoring Survey, access to mental health resources was the #1 stated need of programs across the state. Bill HF 2930 is one step toward bridging the access gap for African American youth in the state. We further believe that the provision to fund career pathways in mental health builds toward long-term health solutions that are truly of and for many African American communities in Minnesota.

For these reasons, we urge you to support HF 2930.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Schaefer", written in a cursive style.

Sarah Schaefer

Executive Director

MENTOR Minnesota