

Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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March 24, 2023

Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55103

Dear Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the nearly 1,000 members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing in strong support of SF 1679, which includes important provisions for improving the mental health workforce in the state of Minnesota and provides critical funding to address gaps in the mental health workforce and training of providers.

In April 2022, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association issued a joint declaration of a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health after finding that at least 21% of U.S. children meet criteria for a mental health disorder and up to 80% of children do not receive needed services in a timely manner. Mental health services remain limited throughout Minnesota.

Well-child visits in pediatric primary care provide opportunities to prevent, identify and treat, or refer children with mental health concerns; 90% of US children regularly visit a pediatric primary care provider and most children under five receive care from a PCP prior to school enrollment (NCQA, 2022). Minnesota families have been increasingly raising concerns about behaviors and emotions during primary care visits, but providers don't always feel prepared to address these questions even though they want to.

We have already seen immense promise in the model outlined in Section 6 of this bill, which is based on a University of Minnesota program focused on integrating mental health education into pediatric primary care settings. Furthermore, investing in programs like this will benefit local Minnesotans directly as 70-90% of all University of Minnesota pediatric primary care trainees go on to practice in Minnesota.

This bill would help train primary care providers to provide mental health care for children and adolescents, and help build a diverse and sustainable workforce. I ask that members support SF 1679.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen Crespo".

Eileen Crespo, MD, FAAP
President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics