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February 27, 2023

Dear members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

I am writing in support of the bill SF 1615 to increase the rates for mental health services.

Rise is a nonprofit organization providing services to Minnesotans with disabilities and mental illness. We serve over 2,500 people per year and have twenty-six locations. In the mental health area specifically, we provide adult rehabilitative mental health services (ARMHS), housing, and employment supports to some of our most vulnerable citizens. Our ARMHS program provides services in nine counties across Central Minnesota and in Anoka County. There are so few ARMHS providers in these areas that our waitlists are long. Not only would more funding make it easier for us to hire staff and grow our own program, but it will also encourage other people to enter the profession reducing waitlists for this critical service.

Rates for mental health services are low which leads to lower salaries for mental health professionals. Mental health providers are significantly underpaid compared to other providers with the same level of education, preparation, expertise, and training requirements. In order to continue to build our mental health system, especially at a time when there are increased mental health needs, rates need to be increased.

Rise enthusiastically supports the passage of SF 1615. We hope that you will approve this important legislation.

Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lynn Noren'.

Lynn Noren
President & CEO