

Minnesota Senate
Human Services Committee
Chair Sen. Hoffman, Vice Chair – Sen. Fateh,
March 27, 2023

Re: Supporting SF 1765 Grants for Autism Therapy Providers

Dear Mr. Chair, Vice Chair and Members, my name is Idil Abdull; I am a Somali Autism Mom and a retiring advocate. First, I want to thank Sen. Abeler who was an instrumental figure in passing the MN law that is now called EIDBI. Abeler was the first person whom we counted on for fairness and equity. He ensured low-income autism families had the same access to therapy as others did at that time. This is when MCOs were denying autism therapy to low-income families.

With the help of Abeler, Berglin, Hann, Gottwalt, and Lourey, we now have this wonderful history making benefit that covers therapy to children and adults with autism up to age 21.

In 2013 when EIDBI passed, there were less than 10 autism therapy providers, today there are about 200. Most of them are minorities. As you all know, there is a chronic shortage of staff on every corner. It is probably worse for EIDBI providers. While we have increased the number of providers, we have not increased the number of staff.

I think this grant will help agencies and give them some relief so that they can continue to do what they do best.

Autism numbers and data:

The Autism Development Disability Monitoring Network (ADDM) just released its numbers. Sadly, the rate has increased again. It is always highest for Somali children, then white children then Hispanic children then other communities follow. The one good news is that identifying minority children early and on-time has improved. That is a huge progress and we appreciate everyone who works on decreasing racial health disparities from every mountain, valley and river.

<https://sahanjournal.com/health/autism-more-common-among-black-hispanic-children-united-states/>

Sincerely,

Idil Abdull – Somali Autism Mom & Advocate