



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
Twin Cities

**Catholic Charities at Elliot Park**  
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March 14, 2024

Senator Melissa Wiklund  
Chair, Senate Health & Human Services Committee

**Re: Mental Health Service Rates (SC0952-2)**

Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Catholic Charities Twin Cities, I write to offer our support for increasing Medicaid community-based mental health rates as proposed in SC0952-2, which is a necessary step to address the current mental health crisis and strengthen day treatment programs for Minnesota youth.

Catholic Charities is a regional leader of housing, emergency shelter and direct services, serving more than 25,000 youth and adults annually. These services include our children's day treatment program, which operates in partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools to provide voluntary, year-round therapeutic services to students in grades K-8 who have mental health needs or behavioral challenges that hinder academic progress.

Through a trauma-informed lens, children in day treatment receive skills development, individual and group therapy, and family education and support to help them build healthy relationships and learn new ways of coping and managing difficult feelings and situations. This full-day program combines treatment and academics in a co-located school setting, allowing children to receive care without having to leave their community and helping to reduce demands on more expensive hospital and emergency room visits.

Day treatment programs provided a valuable service to children and families before COVID-19, and since then the need for such programming has only grown. From 2022–2023, Catholic Charities experienced a nearly 20% increase in demand for day treatment services. Unfortunately, Medicaid mental health rates for this community-based care have been stagnant for years, threatening the ability of providers like us to maintain these vital services and supports and leading to delays in care for children in need.

With Medicaid community-based mental health rates that reimburse for the true cost of care, we could better provide the early intervention needed to ensure more children receive the support and skills they need to thrive in school and their communities. We ask for your support to prioritize this work this session.

Sincerely,

Keith Kozerski  
Chief Program Officer, Catholic Charities Twin cities