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Therapeutic Services Agency | Support MH Rates SC09520-2

March 12, 2024

Dear Chair Wicklund and Health and Human Services Committee Members:

Therapeutic Services Agency, Inc. (TSA) is a mental health agency, 45+ years in operation, located in East Central Minnesota with satellite offices in Moorhead, Coon Rapids and Mankato. In our years of service provision to the communities that we serve, we have impacted the lives of children, families and adults through crucial mental health treatment services. In this legislative session, we, at TSA, along with our fellow colleagues associated with AspireMN and the MN Association of Community Mental Health Programs (MACMHP), implore the Health and Human Services Committee Members to hear our individual and collective voices that we share with you in our letters of request for support. As providers of mental health services, and specific to Medicaid outpatient/community-based providers, we are in a mental health provider crisis.

Staff in our agencies are leaving at alarming rates due to our inability to keep pace with pay and benefits that are offered in hospital, county, or private practice. Mental health programs that provide supportive, wrap around services, are closing at a disturbing pace throughout the state of Minnesota. Children and adults are languishing in hospitals. Our waitlists for services grow as our capacity to provide services decreases across the state.

In January of 2024 AspireMN, MACMHP and the Mental Health Providers Association of Minnesota published data from a statewide survey of 30 organization mental health providers.

- 78% of the organizations reported the inability to hire staff or enhance capacity to meet needs combined with the impact of high staff turnover, increases the acuity of need
- 41% of the organizations reported increasing wait times for services
- 28% of the organizations reported the inability to meet the service needs of their respective communities
- 38% of the organizations reported having closed services
- 22% of the organizations reported the anticipation of closing services in 2024
 - *If those organizations did close in 2024, that number would climb to 60% having closed services
- 66% of the organizations reported having reduced service capacity

When children, families and adults receive timely mental health care, they do better. Addressing our Medicaid outpatient/community-based rates would allow sustainable programs, allow for adequate pay that professionals are leaving our agencies to seek elsewhere. At TSA we want to be responsive to the needs of our community, our children, our families, and the greater system at large. Fixing our Medicaid mental health rates provides us with the most direct tools to secure professionals to do this work. Please **Support MH Rates SC0952-2**.

Regards,

Lainie Janke, MSW, LICSW
Executive Director