

April 9, 2024

Senator Melissa Wiklund
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 2107
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: SF4664 – Providing various supports for child and adolescent mental health care services

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the committee,

On behalf of Allina Health, we are writing to express our strong support for SF4664, which will provide several needed supports for child and adolescent mental health care services in Minnesota.

Allina Health is a fully-integrated health system with 11 hospital campuses, 65 primary care clinics, and 14 urgent care centers across the Twin Cities, and central and southern Minnesota. We provide robust, patient-centered mental health services across the entire continuum and serve patients at every stage of life—from child and adolescent to geriatric. Each year, Allina Health's mental health and addiction program cares for over 100,000 patients statewide through inpatient programs, outpatient services in ambulatory care, adult day treatment, and adolescent partial-hospital treatment.

There are many urgent needs across our mental health care continuum and several provisions of SF4664 will have significant, positive impacts on youth and adolescent patients being able to receive the care they need when and where they need it. This includes developing a medical assistance (MA) benefit for children's residential mental health crisis stabilization and expanding access to respite care. By expanding MA to include these services, the state will be providing much needed financial support to providers that will help provide stable and reliable access for children under 21. Additionally, expanding access to respite care services will open additional options for patients that no longer need hospital-level care. Combined, these two provisions will help alleviate some of the boarding and discharge challenges that our hospitals are facing. In 2023, patients that received mental health services at Allina Health waited an average of 36.83 hours in the hospital after being medically cleared for discharge. Each hour a patient – child or adult – spends awaiting discharge is an hour they are not receiving the appropriate level of care for their unique needs.

For these reasons, we urge you to support SF4664 and help our patients receive the care they need when they need it.

Sincerely,



Joe Clubb, LICSW
Vice President, Mental Health and Addiction Service Line
Allina Health



Mary Beth Lardizabal, DO
Vice President, Mental Health and Addiction Service Line
Allina Health