



An association of resources and advocacy for children, youth and families

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Dear Chair Wiklund Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of Senator Mann's SF4664, the Children's Mental Health Building Blocks proposal. The framework for this proposal was developed by a wide group of stakeholders convened by the Mental Health Legislative Network, in response to the question: *how do we build the mental health system that children and families need?*

SF4664 is the answer to that question for 2024 – we need to build on excellence in services that we have, we need to fill gaps in care, and we need to address the foundational need to invest in Medicaid outpatient mental health rates – to build the system of the future.

With scarce resources available for your HHS budget target, we would point to advancing the proposal for a Medicaid Children's Crisis Residential Stabilization benefit and investment in respite care for families supporting a child with mental illness as top priorities that can maximize immediate and long-term benefit in supporting families and building the continuum that we desperately need.

As we must say repeatedly, the children's mental health crisis cannot be resolved without investment in Medicaid outpatient rates. We greatly appreciate the attention and resolve this committee has paid to this priority, and, remain hopeful for being able to advance viable solutions in this and future years.

Importantly, the Children's Mental Health Building Blocks point out for us all that we can stop this crisis, we can build what children and families need to live their best lives. Many thanks to each of you for your contributions to this work, and to Senator Mann for her leadership on behalf of children and families and in support of SF4664.

Warm regards,

Kirsten Anderson
Executive Director

AspireMN improves the lives of children, youth and families served by member organizations through support for quality service delivery, leadership development and policy advocacy.

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