



April 6, 2024

**\*Sent via email**

The Honorable Senator Wiklund, Chair  
Health and Human Services Committee  
2107 Minnesota Senate Building  
95 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Residential mental health crisis stabilization for children**

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

Olmsted County is grateful to you for hearing [SF 4664](#) (Mann) and for the opportunity to provide our strong support for the bill. Many children and youth in our community and across the state face difficult mental and behavioral health symptoms each day. The current service delivery landscape does not offer adequate community-based solutions to address the needs of many families. The results are more youth needing care in emergency departments or in more intensive residential programs.

SF 4664 includes several proposals and appropriations for community-based programs to improve the state's mental health system for children. Olmsted County supports the bill in whole but would like to highlight one provision to provide a medical assistance benefit for children's residential mental health crisis stabilization services.

Olmsted County is proud of our local partnerships and grateful for the strong support from the Minnesota Legislature that enabled us to build and operate the Southeast Regional Crisis Center (SERCC). Through the SERCC, the county and local partners provide walk-in mental health services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including community-based residential stabilization services for children, youth, and adults.

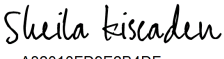
The residential stabilization services provided for adults at the SERCC are funded through medical assistance, but the same services for individuals under the age of 18 are not covered. Residential crisis stabilization services are critical for children and youth to access services needed to resolve a crisis episode. This supports families by working with individuals experiencing mental health symptoms in a community setting. The goal is to reduce more costly services, such as emergency department and child placement, as well as providing connection to ongoing services needed to prevent future crisis episodes. Sustaining these programs is critical to supporting our communities.

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Olmsted County has been working with our local legislative delegation on similar bill language to provide medical assistance coverage of children's residential crisis stabilization services. Representative Hicks and Senator Boldon introduced these bills ([HF 4779/SF 4619](#)) which are currently in the jurisdiction of the Health and Human Services Committees. We urge you to consider the approach these bills take to providing the common goal of establishing a medical assistance benefit but with a more urgent timeline to implement the coverage.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

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Sheila Kiscaden, Chair  
Olmsted County Board of Commissioners  
sheila.kiscaden@olmstedcounty.gov