



Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Minnesota Senate
April 8, 2024

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

As you hear and act on the Children's Building Blocks bill (SF 4664) Tuesday, I want to share what our team at Washburn Center for Children witnesses every day: kids in your communities are living in and through a massive mental health crisis.

Worse yet: There's no indication we've seen the peak. This is an unimaginable crisis gripping children and teens.

Since I wrote to your colleagues on the Human Services Policy Committee in January: ***our waitlist has exploded by 30%. That's just 3 months.*** While surging demand keeps exceeding our capacity, we know every child we reach makes a difference.

Their mental health is our mission: to nurture every child and family's well-being and full potential through transformative children's mental health care.

The mental health care kids receive at Washburn Center is a safety-net. Community-based mental health care is for all kids and families who need us, period. We offer services in community, schools, homes and clinics, regardless of the client's ability to pay.

Every kid we serve — nearly 4,000 last year — is navigating mental health challenges that outpace what we imagined for this generation—any generation.

The stark reality is Minnesota children and family need the critical provisions to access mental health care today. It is not inconceivable that a family may be waiting for up to 9 months to start services. **We need action and your support of SF 4664 and children's mental health.**

Equitable access to care improves outcomes. Without it, the costs are significant on the education, legal, healthcare and social service systems; With mental health care, children will grow to their full potential, making our community healthier.

Thank you for hosting this hearing. We are confident in your leadership to take action for the health and wellbeing of children and the future of Minnesota.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Craig F. Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Craig" being more prominent.

Craig F. Warren
Chief Executive Officer
Washburn Center for Children