



April 18, 2024

Chair Wiklund, Lead Utke, members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee;

We write to you in support of several provisions in SF4699, as amended by the DE2, and applaud you for the dedication to early childhood.

Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce is a group of child care professionals, early childhood educators, and agency representatives, who focus on legislative policies aimed at supporting the "workforce behind the workforce." We uplift initiatives that are directly related to the "adults in the room" – those who provide child care and early education.

Members of this committee are no strangers to the dire needs of the child care workforce in Minnesota. You supported many beneficial items in 2023, the full benefits of which we have yet to fully realize, and for that investment we are thankful. Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce members were excited to see the inclusion of our top priority that did not receive attention in 2023, included in this 2024 bill – dedicated funding of the early childhood provider mental health consultation program within DHS. This program has enormous impact that continues to grow, and having dedicated funding will help provide consultation services consistently to all providers across the state, regardless of setting. You heard in committee the great outcomes from engaging with mental health professionals in this program can help providers better serve their communities and process difficult situations, which can lead to sustained operations, supported staff, and even saving programs from potential closure.

In addition, we are excited to see the inclusion of these other provisions relating to the child care workforce:

- Weighted Risk System for Licensed Child Care Providers
- Grant to Coordinate Professional Development for Child Care Provider Associate Credential
- Child Care Improvement (Facility Revitalization) Grants
- Continued funding for the Family Child Care Ombudsperson

Thank you again for the inclusion of these important provisions in the HHS omnibus bill. We encourage you to advance the bill out of committee today and encourage future conferees to protect these provisions throughout the conference committee process. Thank you for your work.

Ann McCully, Chair

Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce