



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Twin Cities

Children's Day Treatment
Wilder Complex
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2/24/2025

Chair Wiklund

Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

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

I am writing to you today in regard to Medical Assistance Rates Reform HF1005/SF1402. I have worked in human services across the Twin Cities for the past 15 years and have seen a dramatic and concerning shift in our sector. Our services have dwindled across the board, while the need for services and the acuity of symptoms in our populations have greatly increased. There has been a devastating loss of programs supporting youth in our schools and in day treatment, as well as other Children's Therapeutic Supports and Services. I have seen my friends and colleagues become burnt out trying to find the sufficient support needed for their clients, while families and schools remain stuck in a pattern of crises. Children are being brought to the Emergency Department and either they're being sent back home without any additional support, or their caregivers refuse to come and pick them up due to an inability to keep them safe and a lack of support needed to manage their crisis.

The Mental Health Professionals in Minnesota know what these children need but are unable to coordinate the services due to a lack of accessible programming and an absence of support from the legislature. As the number of children needing mental health services increases, the workforce is decreasing. In addition to the physical and emotional toll placed on therapists who are being asked to serve unrealistic numbers of cases, they are also not being adequately compensated for their work. I know several fantastic therapists who have left the field for something that allows them to better manage their own well-being while making just as much, if not more than they were in community mental health.

Our program remains as one of very few day treatment programs left in the Twin Cities who are providing services to school-aged children, and our wait time for families is often several months long. We would not be able to continue supporting our state's youth in this way if it wasn't for our community partners who collaborate with us so that our doors can stay open. We continue to push forward to be able to serve our clients and families despite barriers at many levels because we know how important our work is. The support of our community partners is not guaranteed, however, which means the kids in Minnesota can NOT wait any longer for an increase in rates and access to the treatments they so desperately need.

Sincerely,

Jessica Dreischmeier, MA, LMFT

Program Director

Catholic Charities Children's Day Treatment