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To: Chair Wicklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Date: February 24, 2025
RE: SF0928
FROM: Lainie Janke, MSW, LICSW – Executive Director

Lainie Janke, MSW, LICSW

Dear Honorable Chair Wicklund and Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee-

I am writing to provide support for SF0928- School-linked funding, NEMT improvements & aftercare support. Increased schooling funding is a necessary legislative step to address the growing mental health crisis among children and adolescents. Schools are often the first point of contact for students experiencing mental health challenges, yet many lack the resources to provide adequate support by increasing. Funding for school based mental health services Lawmakers can ensure that mental health providers have the necessary resources to work with schools to address the mental health crisis. This investment reduces barriers to care by making services more accessible, especially for low-income and. For all students who may struggle to access community-based providers. Additionally, expanding school linked funding helps prevent more severe mental health crises, reducing emergency room visits and long-term health care costs. Legislators have a responsibility to equip schools with the tools needed to support students' well-being. Which in turn leads to improved academic outcomes, lower absenteeism and healthier communities.

SF0928 allows for providers to work with care providers, parents, kin care providers, who need supports in caring for their children. It also addresses transportation for students receiving school-linked behavioral health services when school is not in session, builds the capacity of schools to meet the needs of students with mental health and substance use disorder concerns, including school staff development activities for licensed and non-licensed staff; and allows for the purchasing equipment, connection charges, on-site coordination, set-up fees, and site fees in order to deliver school-linked behavioral health services via telehealth.

SF0928 also provides incentives for MNET transportation providers to be trained in the Tye 3 school training that outlines children's needs, as transportation is an essential and integral part of the children's mental health continuum.