



**Carver County
Health and Human Services**

Human Services Building

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March 28, 2025

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair
95 University Ave. W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2107
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Paul Utke, Republican Lead
95 University Ave. W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2403
St. Paul MN 55155

RE: Support for HF 2040/SF2349: Children's Mental Health

Chair Wiklund, Lead Utke, and Health and Human Services Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter supporting HF2040/SF2349. This important legislation, developed collaboratively by seven metro counties, is critical to addressing the urgent need for improvements in how we serve youth with complex mental and behavioral health needs. The result will be a regional continuum of care for serving these youth no matter how they enter the county system, using a whole-person, cross-system approach.

The 2023 legislature established and tasked a Working Group on Youth Interventions to evaluate the out-of-home placement options in Minnesota for youth adjudicated to be either in need of protection or services through the child protection or juvenile delinquency system (2023 Minnesota Session Law, Chapter 62, Article 2, §119) and develop recommendations. I as the Carver County Health and Human Services/Probation Services Director was one of the metro representatives on the working group. The working group submitted a final report in February 2024 to the legislature, but no action was taken in response to that report during the 2024 legislative session.

As recommended by the Working Group on Youth Interventions, establishing a regional approach will address the overlap of juvenile justice and human services systems to provide placement and treatment options across the continuum. The regional framework will help counties leverage individual and collective assets and resources, identify gaps, and develop solutions.

Carver County supports cost-effective evidence-based solutions to serve county-connected youth. These solutions include:

- Forming a legislative task force to revise and update Minn. R. 2960
- Addressing placement options for youth
- Removing a moratorium on new beds for foster care homes
- Beginning to implement the rate study recommendations for non-residential youth programming.

Carver County is deeply involved and committed to the regional framework to connect youth with critical resources. We believe this approach will meet the needs of these youth and their families. I urge your support for this effort, as we work to meet the needs of Minnesota's youth.

Sincerely,

Heather A. Goodwin
Director for Health & Human Services/Probation Services
Carver County