April 15, 2026

To: Chair Klein and Members of the Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee

From: Julie Sjordal, CEO, St. David's Developmental & Therapeutic Services

RE: SF43654

Dear Chair Klein and Members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee,

Thank you for including clarifying language affirming that clinical trainees are a vital part of Minnesota's mental health workforce. This clarification protects a longstanding and essential component of how high-quality mental health services are delivered to children and families across the state.

St. David's provides a continuum of mental health interventions—assessment, school-based therapies, parent–child outpatient services, and intensive day treatment—serving more than 8,000 children and caregivers each year. Many of the children we support are coping with early adversity or behavioral challenges, and 600 children are currently waiting for an opening in one of our programs.

Of our 200 mental health clinicians, 42 are clinical trainees. Minnesota's strong supervision requirements ensure these early-career professionals receive robust oversight while gaining the experience needed to become skilled clinicians. At St. David's, trainees receive weekly individual and group supervision, extensive continuing education, and immediate access to onsite consultation. This model is foundational to the functioning of our mental health system.

Historically, all payers have reimbursed for services provided by clinical trainees. When one payer recently indicated they would no longer do so, it created a crisis for providers and families. Without clear statutory direction, agencies face an untenable choice: leave children without services or provide care without reimbursement—both unacceptable in a system already strained by workforce shortages and rising demand.

If organizations cannot employ and bill for master's-level clinical trainees, capacity will shrink, wait times will grow, and children and caregivers will remain in crisis. Your clarification ensures Minnesota can maintain the workforce necessary to deliver accessible, high-quality mental health care statewide.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to Minnesota's children, families, and mental health workforce.

Sincerely,
Julie Sjordal
Chief Executive Officer
St. David's Developmental and Therapeutic Services