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STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH  
*and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health*

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January 14, 2022

The Honorable Tim Walz  
Governor of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

We, the members of the State Advisory Council on Mental Health and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health, **urge you to declare a state of emergency for children's mental health because there is an urgent need to address Minnesota's child and adolescent mental health crisis:**

- Local emergency departments are seeing an increase in pediatric patients experiencing major depression, self-injurious behavior and suicidal ideation. Youth are presenting with a higher level of acuity and are requiring hospital admission.
- Minnesota has insufficient psychiatric beds so emergency departments are boarding youth for days or weeks until beds become available.
- Staffing shortages in mental health care facilities equate to longer wait-times and reduced access to care.
- Students and school systems are struggling. Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative surveyed over 990 students; 77% reported they are struggling with their mental health.

U.S Surgeon General has warned that "the pandemic has had dire mental health impacts on American youth." While there was significant concern for youth mental health in 2020, it has only been worsened by the ongoing pandemic that has impacted nearly every aspect of children's lives. In his advisory entitled [Protecting Youth Mental Health](#), the U.S Surgeon General writes that the negative impact of the pandemic most heavily affects marginalized youth, including youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, children of color, LGBTQ youth, children who are either homeless or in low-income households, youth in rural areas, youth in immigrant households, and children in the juvenile justice system. This is also true in our great state.

We, the members of the State Advisory Council on Mental Health and the Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health, stand ready to provide you with specific and targeted recommendations to address the children's mental health crisis in Minnesota. We represent experts, consumers, advocates, parents, and individuals with lived experiences and are responsible for advising your office, the Minnesota State Legislature, and all state agencies about policy, programs, and services affecting individuals with mental health concerns.

The Surgeon General states that the long-term implications of the pandemic on children are "still being written and it's something we can shape actually by the action that we take today." **Please take action today by declaring a state of emergency in children's mental health so that our struggling children and youth can live to see tomorrow.**

Sincerely,

Lisa Hoogheem, MA, LADC  
Co-Chair  
Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health

Dave Lee, MA, LP, LMFT, LICSW  
Chair  
State Advisory Council on Mental Health



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*Cecilia Hughes*

Cecilia Hughes, LICSW  
Co-Chair  
Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health

*Michael Trangle*

Michael Trangle, MD  
Vice-Chair  
State Advisory Council on Mental Health