

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

April 10, 2020

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 are contacting you today on behalf of the Minnesota State Advisory Council on Mental Health and the Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health. We ask you to make an investment in our state's telepresence platform to allow for continued and expanded use of the system during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

The DHS/MNIT owned-and-operated telepresence network provides secure, encrypted, HIPAA compliant connections to over 6000 users –which include Minnesota tribal nations, counties, law enforcement, courts, schools, mental health providers, other human service agencies, and those they serve. In order to continue to serve our communities and provide these critical services during the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to ensure this telepresence platform is strong and able to withstand the continually and rapidly increasing number of users. Funding in the amount of \$2 million is needed to upgrade the DHS/MNIT telepresence system.

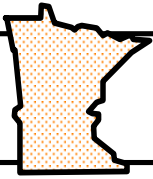
In addition to these upgrades, we are asking that efforts be made to ensure Minnesotans have internet access and the devices needed (tablets/smartphones) to access telemedicine services. We also request the Department of Health and the Department of Commerce ensure mental health and substance use disorder telehealth services are processed and paid on par with medical telehealth services.

Please make this investment in our state's telepresence platform to allow us to continue to serve our communities in this time of crisis. This is a One Minnesota investment that supports ALL Minnesotans including the marginalized, often overlooked, and most vulnerable among us to access vital mental health services.

Sincerely,

Michelle Schmid-Egleston
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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