



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

June 10, 2021

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

Honorable Paul Gazelka
Minnesota State Senate
3113 Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155

Honorable Ryan Winkler
Minnesota House of Representatives
459 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz, Senator Gazelka, and Representative Winkler:

We, the State Advisory Council on Mental Health and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health, are writing you today to implore you to complete the state budget as soon as possible and no later than June 30, 2021. We understand that the state budget is deeply complex and we truly appreciate the representation of and advocacy for your constituents and the citizens of the Minnesota. As mental health professionals, advocates, family members of individuals receiving mental health care and individuals who personally obtain mental health care, we are deeply concerned about the repercussions of the state closing down if a budget agreement is not reached. We are concerned about the current added stress each day to residents over the fear that the budget will not be reached.

Our state is truly experiencing a mental health crisis. While we do not have scientifically gathered information, anecdotally our mental health professionals have stated that in April and May of this year, they dealt with more children, adolescents and young adults who needed emergency care due to active suicidal behavior than they have in the past several years combined. Parents and adults report difficulties completing basic tasks such as getting out of bed in the morning, feelings of hopelessness, and concerns about their future. Many providers are so busy that they have stopped taking new patients all together. Other providers who still are willing to accept new patients need to wait several more weeks to schedule a second appointment after the initial intake session.

Mental health providers in large health organizations, community clinics, and single providers around the state rely on state resources and employees for billing, certification, licensure, and other services. Many of these providers are experiencing symptoms of burn out. If



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organizations are not able to obtain state resources that allow them to continue to provide services, not only will it further impact our state's mental health providers, it will impact our state's recipients of mental health services, their families, their schools, their places of employment, and their communities.

We know there are many days between today and June 30th. We ask that you use these days as wisely and judiciously as possible, to obtain the best outcomes for our state: an agreed upon budget.

Sincerely,

Michelle Schmid-Egleston, MA, LP
Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health

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

Jeffrey Lind
Co-Chair
Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health

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