



2020 Report to the Governor and Legislature

TOP PRIORITY

No mental health budget cuts

The State Advisory Council on Mental Health and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health recognize the significant uncertainty that faces Governor Walz, the Legislature, and Minnesota state agencies in the 2021 legislative session. We understand Minnesota is facing a major budget deficit and the tough decisions that attend such financial challenges. However, Minnesota's mental health system was underfunded and underdeveloped before the COVID-19 pandemic. Many desperately needed investments will have to wait for a better financial outlook for Minnesota's budget, but that does not mean that leaders should look to the mental health system for cost savings. **Please do not make any budgetary cuts to our already overburdened mental health system.**

The COVID-19 Pandemic continues to increase the demands upon a mental health system that is already overextended. Medical Assistance rates are not sufficient to sustain our community mental health programs, while private payers are still not adequately following mental health parity regulations. Mental Health Grant programs are currently underfunded and support highly effective programs like school-linked mental health, mobile crisis teams, and programs that support people to transition out of very expensive care at state-operated programs.

The State Advisory Council on Mental Health and Subcommittee on Children's Mental Health urge leaders across Minnesota Government to look elsewhere as cuts to government prove to be necessary. Cutting funding for mental health services will not reduce the need for mental health care and, when folks fall through the cracks, they will likely require more expensive treatment in a hospital or state-operated program. Any funding cuts to mental health services would increase already present disparities in accessing vital mental health services. Again, our top priority is to ensure that no budgetary cuts are made to Minnesota's mental health system.