



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

March 15, 2016

I am pleased to write in support of Minnesota's efforts to establish Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) and am grateful to Governor Dayton for including funding for this initiative as part of his budget proposal this legislative session to the Minnesota legislature.

Minnesota is, and has been, an innovation center for healthcare in this country and this effort is an example of this ingenuity. CCBHCs will be community clinics that offer mental health and substance use disorder services as well as a range of other services – putting people first, not silos. This innovative model of care is designed to increase access, improve services, and serve as a “one-stop-shop” to those who are currently underserved.

Minnesota, like many other states, struggles to make mental health services readily and evenly available, resulting in serious gaps in the continuum of care for those who are particularly vulnerable. This means people may go without critical services or have often been forced to use services that are not targeted and effectively resourced. We need to make sure people receive the care they need, targeted at the health challenges they face.

In addition to Governor Dayton's proposed investments in mental health this year, in 2015 the state made significant investments in community mental health. As a result, new and augmented services are currently rolling out, such as new crisis teams in more parts of the state, more and enhanced Assertive Community Treatment services, and more residential crisis services for all Minnesotans. CCBHCs are part of this vision. With a high level of care coordination and partnerships between providers, social services agencies, counties, and other key stakeholders, people are more likely to receive the care they need BEFORE they are in crisis, lessening the burden on emergency rooms and law enforcement.

We are hopeful that, with the continued funding requested in the Governor's budget request, Minnesota will be one of eight states selected in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's demonstration program. This would allow us to build on our planning work and ultimately certify at least two clinics to serve as CCBHCs in Minnesota by summer 2017. If Minnesota is selected, this is an opportunity to provide patient-centered care to those living with mental and chemical health challenges to receive better, more coordinated, and more cost effective care – goals we all share.

To everyone involved in this initiative – thank you for your commitment to strengthening Minnesota's mental health system and improving the lives of people with mental illness and their families.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Emily Johnson Piper
Minnesota Department of Human Services

