



Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, Inc.

*MACMHP improves access to and quality
of behavioral healthcare in Minnesota.*

March 3, 2016

Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor, State of Minnesota
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton:

We write to you today as a broad coalition supporting the state's efforts to improve and transform the delivery of mental and chemical health care services in Minnesota through the Excellence in Mental Health Act.

Navigating the mental health and substance use disorder systems as they exist today in Minnesota can be extremely difficult. Typically, a person with a mental illness will need to contact several different agencies to obtain a different level of care, and rarely can someone obtain both mental health and substance use disorder treatment through the same agency. The Excellence Act will improve the way Minnesotans access mental health and addiction treatment by creating a "one-stop-shop" model of certified community clinics that provide comprehensive, coordinated and integrated care to children and adults with complex mental and chemical health conditions under a new payment model – a daily cost-based rate for all services.

When a Minnesotan walks through any one of these clinics' doors, he or she will receive coordinated care for mental, chemical and physical health needs – and Minnesota will have uniform, measurable ways to demonstrate the value of these services and calculate their costs. By providing this high level of care coordination and incentivizing partnerships among providers, social services agencies, counties and other key stakeholders, the Excellence Act will greatly increase the likelihood that care will be received before a person enters into crisis, lessening the burden on families, emergency rooms and law enforcement.

This is truly a transformative moment for Minnesota. In 2014, Congress enacted the Excellence in Mental Health Act, which established an eight-state demonstration project to test "Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics" (CCBHCs). The 2015 Legislature promptly provided funding to support the state's efforts to participate in the demonstration project. In October 2015, Minnesota was selected as one of 24 states to receive a federal planning grant. Of the states awarded planning grants, up to eight will be selected as demonstration sites.



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Minnesota must act now in order to ensure that we have the strongest federal application possible to be selected as one of the final demonstration states. Legislation setting forth the requirements for the state's continued action on the creation of CCBHCs is moving forward with strong bipartisan support and must be passed this session in order for the state to be considered as a viable demonstration site.

We recognize that in light of the current budget forecast, you are faced with many difficult decisions. However, this critical investment in the state's mental and chemical health system simply cannot wait. We ask that you include \$8.5 million in funding over three years for the Excellence in Mental Health Act in your 2016 supplemental budget. This relatively small amount of funding has the potential to fundamentally transform the landscape of health care in Minnesota and will improve the lives of those living with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders. There will also be federal matching Medicaid funds.

On behalf of all the below signed individuals and organizations, we thank you for all your past support of Minnesota's mental health system and the individuals and families it serves. We look forward to working in partnership with you and the Department of Human Services to ensure that Minnesota remains one of the nation's leaders in the movement toward an integrated health system that benefits all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Claire Wilson

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Cc: Commissioner Emily Johnson Piper
Lauren Gilchrist
Shawntera Hardy



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Additional Signers/Organizations Supporting the Excellence in Mental Health Act

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Carey Zahrbock, Medica Behavioral Health
Darrin Helt, Blue Cross Blue Shield MN
Dave Cook, Zumbro Valley Health Center
Genoa Health Care Systems
Glenn Anderson, Northern Pines Mental Health Center
Jim Getchell, Human Development Center
Lucas Kunach, Fraser
Matt Eastwood, Canvas Health
Mark Casagrande, Park Avenue Center
Mental Health Minnesota
Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies
Minnesota Hospital Association
The Minnesota Military Mental Health Initiative Committee
Minnesota Recovery Connection
Minnesota Safety Net Coalition
NAMI-Minnesota
Nancy Houlton, Houlton Consulting
Roger Meyer, Meyer Consulting
Shauna Reitmeir, Northwestern Mental Health Center