

Minnesota Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

March 5, 2019

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing today as the MN Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry President to express support for SF1702/HF1540. Accessibility to mental health care for the youth in our state is one of our primary missions. The rate of mental health diagnosis for youth continues to rise. Unfortunately, we do not and will not be able address this need with the current or projected number of child and adolescent psychiatrists in the state - even as additional training positions are opened. We strongly support the proposed innovative approach to training. Mental health experts at the University of Minnesota will provide pediatric residents with interdisciplinary teaching in real time as they are seeing and evaluating patients. This education will be critical to equip pediatricians with the necessary skills to identify mental health problems early in their course, before they become more serious, impairing and expensive to treat. By increasing pediatrician's expertise in triaging, assessing, and managing patients with mental health conditions, child and adolescent psychiatrists will be more accessible to provide care to the most complex patient cases.

The proposed initiative will put Minnesota at the leading edge of pediatric education nationally for care of mental health issues in children by providing the following:

- This program will place pediatric residents in multidisciplinary mental health teams, and provide education in assessment, management, and treatment of common mental health conditions.
- It will provide formal psychiatric consultation to pediatric residents in their primary care and community clinic rotations.
- As most of the pediatricians across the state were trained at the University of Minnesota, this training program will have a major impact for the children in our state by providing the primary care doctors at the "front lines" with the ability to identify and treat common mental health concerns in children.
- This program provides a feasible, sustainable, long-term solution to the child psychiatry workforce shortage and mental health access crisis by shifting the care of common mental health problems in children to pediatricians, thereby increasing access to care across the state.
- The first year of funding will focus on pediatric residents; future efforts will expand the educational tools to other disciplines working at the front lines with children via development of sustainable partnerships with community mental health resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to meet to further discuss this innovative solution to help meet our patients' need of accessible and effective mental health care.

Sincerely,



Joshua Stein, MD
President