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Thank you for allowing us to share with you today. Headway Emotional Health Services is a 51-year-old organization out of Richfield, Hopkins and Brooklyn Center with a mission to empower people of all ages to live emotionally healthy lives.

We are writing in support of **HF3215** mental health emergency workforce funding. We believe children's mental healthcare is in crisis. Our work, along with many other children's mental health providers have been doing all we can to meet the increased needs brought on by the pandemic. This funding will allow us to support, retain and increase our workforce. We must be able to do this, if we are to keep up with the growing, and changing needs of youth and children's mental health.

We have experienced employee turnover in excess of 60% during the 24 months of COVID. Initially the turnover was fear of the virus and a dislike for virtual interactions. Over the last 18 months turnover has driven by burnout, low pay, frustration with the inability to do more to help kids and families and the lack of support from the State, Counties and school districts. There is a real sense of powerlessness for staff as large numbers of children and family's mental health and coping skills spiral downward and the limited ability to intervene.

Being able to provide additionally financial resources to staff and organizations is one way to demonstrate that the community values the lives of struggling children and those that are doing all they can to keep them functioning at their highest level. This funding is the immediate priority, it is required to respond to today's incredible crisis in our children's mental health continuum. As the need for children's mental health care grows, so does the burnout and turnover of mental health care providers and professionals. This funding helps us, so we can continue to help the youngest, most vulnerable members of our community. We are asking you to move swiftly on HF3215, getting this funding to the organizations and staff that are doing the important work of battling this crisis.

Headway Emotional Health Services is a comprehensive mental health care provider serving women, men, children and adolescents in the Twin Cities area for more than 50 years. Headway's mission is to empower people of all ages to live emotionally healthy lives. For more information visit www.headway.org.

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