

March 30, 2022

Chair Schultz and the Human Service Finance and Policy Committee Members,

Last July, Grafton Integrated Health began developing a PRTF in Cold Spring MN for up to 30 children with mental health who also have autism, developmental disabilities, or other behavioral issues or function levels that may make it difficult for the child to succeed in a traditional program. Grafton is nearing opening and we have been excited to share what we plan to offer with the surrounding community within Central Minnesota.

While we have been clear that we want to have a soft open and grow the clientele slowly to ensure a quality program, this has not limited interest in the program. Grafton has already spoken to potential families from around the state including Hennepin, Mille Lacs, Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, Wright, Blue Earth, and Waseca. All together we have talked to potential referral sources for about 30 children who they would like to see their child placed tomorrow. This is on top of those children needing placement who are currently in hospital settings. Plus, we are a new program that is gaining momentum, so many potential referral sources haven't found us yet.

Can you imagine being a parent of one of these 30 children, hoping that Grafton will take your child when we open? You have been struggling to hold on and keep your child at home planning to have your child moved into the PRTF. Yet, when we open, we will only be able to fill 4-6 beds during the initial school year due to staffing both academically and for the PRTF. It is because of these children, we want to open and provide care, and that takes staff, training, and resources- both financial and programming.

HF3274 is a step in the right direction. I respectfully request your support of this legislation so we can move forward with ensuring quality services for children in MN.

Lori.

Lori Schmidt, BA, JD (she/her/hers)
Executive Director

